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THE
WEDDING RING;
OR,
HISTORY
OF
MISS SIDNEY.

THE
WEDDING
OR
HIS
OF
MRS. S. D. T.

THE
WEDDING RING;
OR,
HISTORY
OF

MISS SIDNEY.

In a Series of LETTERS.

In THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for F. NOBLE, near MIDDLE ROW, HOL-
BORN; and J. NOBLE, in St. MARTIN'S COURT,
St. MARTIN'S LANE.

MDCCLXXIX.

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THE
WEDDING RING;
OR,
HISTORY
OF
MISS SIDNEY.

Miss SIDNEY, to Miss WOODLEY.

Town of —.

MY generous Harriet's most affectionate, and truly kind epistle, should not have remained ten days unacknowledged, had not an accident

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B

pre-

2 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

prevented my writing. But do not, my dearest friend, be alarmed, for I am perfectly well in health; and only deferred writing till I could tell you the effects of an unfortunate hurt I have had, occasioned by a fall, were likewise on the mending hand.—But not to keep you in painful suspense, concerning this unlucky accident, I will hasten to give you an account of it.

I was amusing myself, about ten days ago, in my little apartment, with dressing up a basin of flowers to adorn my small chimney-piece, when being obliged to stand upon a chair to fix it properly, my foot unfortunately slipped, and down I fell. In trying to save myself, I struck

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 3

struck my shoulder with such force against the corner of a chest of drawers, that I thought I had broke the bone. My left arm and hand were likewise much hurt. My screams, and the noise I made in falling, soon brought up good Mrs. Mills, who immediately ordered her maid to bring a bottle of brandy, of which she insisted I should drink a glass, but not complying with her intreaties, she fell to bathing the bruises I had received. My arm was not broke, but by the dreadful pain I endured, I imagined the shoulder was dislocated.

“ Do, dear Madam, (said my kind landlady) let Peggy run to fetch a

4 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
surgeon:—here is one in the next
street.”

This I violently opposed, as I imagined that rest would relieve me; but, however, I was mistaken, for by the next morning, the brandy had so much inflamed the bruises, that I was in an agony of pain. I began then to think it absolutely necessary I should have some advice, for with a dislocated shoulder (as I believed mine was) how would it be possible for your poor Lucy to get her future livelihood? I then desired the surgeon might be sent for;—but, perhaps, I had better never have seen him: for, ah! Harriet, such a man!—

I was

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 5

I was sitting alone, in a very disconsolate posture, and had been weeping, when he entered the room.—I never saw a more amiable man.—Graceful in his person—great expression of sensibility in his countenance,—his address easy and agreeable—and, what is most uncommon in one of his profession, possessed of the greatest share of tenderness and compassion.

On his approaching me, I thought he looked round the room with some surprize, as indeed well he might, to see a young creature entirely alone, without a friend, or companion of any kind. I fancy he thought it had an odd appearance.—Do not you imagine

6 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
he must think it strange?—My desolate condition, that moment, appeared in its strongest light, and I blushed, I knew not why.

A tremor, for which I cannot account, seized me on his examining my shoulder, which he did with the greatest tenderness, as well as most respectful modesty.—Ah! my dear, what a *rare* but *valuable* character is a *really* modest man!

He told me what he applied would soon relieve my pain, which was occasioned by a violent contusion. He then, with the utmost respect, took my hand, (and, O Harriet, it was that nasty *left* hand,

hand, on which was the wedding ring, which I thought he *eyed*, with some surprise) and after bathing my bruises, with the greatest humanity, he asked me, if there was any thing further in his power in which he could relieve me.—There was something so humane in his manner,—so soothing in his voice ! —(alas ! to the friendless,—to the distressed, every trifling favour is a balmy comfort to the wounded mind) that, from an impulse of mere gratitude, with an hundred ideas of my forlorn, my helpless state, which that moment rushed in my mind, I could not forbear bursting into tears.

8 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

“ No, Sir—(said I, even sobbing) I have no other hurts—of these, I shall soon, I doubt not, recover.”

He made no answer,—and I thought seemed surprized at my tears.—I was very angry with myself for such a proof of weakness :—but my spirits were sunk, and then, you know, my Harriet, every thing affects the dejected mind.—Not ten words I believe on either side passed in this visit, but I observed those *he* made use of, were perfectly well-chosen, sensible, and judicious. You know I am remarkably reserved, so that this was a kind of silent interview. I begged him, however, to sit down; which he declined; and telling me, he would

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 9

would see me again the next day, he took an hasty but polite leave, and instantly withdrew.

You will laugh, my dear, at what I am going to say; but this gentleman has more of that polite delicacy, which you and I have so often believed not one man in the world possessed, than I ever yet saw.

On his departure I sat for some moments lost in thought:—then wiping away my tears, I could not help exclaiming softly, “ Good heavens! how unlike is this man to the vile, the detestable wretch, who drove me from peace and happiness!” But I had not

10 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

remained long in my reverie, before the good-natured, but loquacious Mrs. Mills, came in to ask how I did.

“ And well, Madam, I hope you like Mr. Harley”—(now, Harriet, you know his name) “ to be sure there never was so young a man so good.—O, Madam, if you could hear what the poor says of him!—for though he has lately had a large fortune fall to him, he does not refuse (as too many of them do) to attend the meanest wretch in the town. He asked me a power of questions about you, Madam.”

“ About me ?”—

“ Yes,

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 11

“ Yes, indeed Madam, for when he came down stairs, I stepped out of my little parlour, to ask him how you did, and after he had told me your hurts were not dangerous, he asked me who you was,—where you came from,—and expressed great surprize that so *fine* a young creature (that, Madam, was his word) should be entirely alone without so much as one friend with you. He said, he observed you was a married woman, for that he saw —.”

“ Yes, (said I, a little peevishly) I believe he saw my wedding ring.”

“ He did, Madam, and added, he supposed it was some run-away match,

12 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

and that you had possibly eloped from, or offended your friends in your choice, being quite alone.—Nay, I told him, you would not be prevailed on to leave your chamber, and that I was fearful you would hurt your health, by shutting yourself up from all the world.”

“And why, Mrs. Mills, (peevishly interrupting her) did you say this? I certainly have a right to do as I please in your house.”

“O, Madam, I beg your pardon, but when one sees a young lady so fond of *privacy*, and so often in tears, as Peggy says you are, one cannot help pitying the cause.”

See,

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 13

See, my Harriet, how cautious a young person ought to be, not even to give the most distant occasion for the least shadow of suspicion, since the world cannot know, as in my case, the *motives* of our actions, and ever did, and ever will judge from appearances only. So pettish was I grown on the sudden (though, certainly, Mrs. Mills had reason to think something very strange and mysterious in my conduct) and so unreasonable was I, that I could have found in my heart to have been almost angry with the good-natured creature; but her smiles, and obliging chearfulness, soon disarmed my anger. She went on.

“ I was

14 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

“ I was myself married, and a mother, at seventeen :—and so I told Mr. Harley.”

Aye, thought I, your tongue ran fast enough, I dare say.

“ Mr. Harley, said I, why, what was it to him?”

“ O, Madam — nothing — but only we were talking of how young a *married* lady you are :—and he said it was great pity (for indeed he has uncommon humanity) that you should be left or abandoned by a husband.”

“ For

HISTORY OF Miss SIDNEY. 15

“ For that matter (said I, reddening with shame, and shocked to death that I should have appeared in a feigned character) no one can judge of another’s reasons—neither should we pass our judgment on their conduct, without knowing why.”

Here I could have cried for downright vexation, that I had suffered myself to practice such a deception.—But to turn off the subject I said, “ and so you was married young yourself?”

“ Yes, Madam, and was left a poor helpless widow at four and twenty years of age, with five small children in the utmost distress: (my pity, now, insensibly

16 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

sibly got the better of every grain of displeasure I had conceived, and I could even have accompanied her in her tears)—and had it not been, Mrs. Johnson (here I felt a painful twinge) for an humane friend or two, I must have suffered the want of even common necessities;—but Mr. Harley, for all he is so young a man, Madam—(I blushed, I knew not why) is so very humane, as to pay for the education of my three boys.—Nay, he says, he shall provide for Billy entirely.—You never saw him; a fine, tall youth, the very image of his poor father. If Mr. Harley ever leaves this place, I shall heavily miss him, and indeed every other person in distress here will have reason to lament the loss
of

of so good a man,—and not yet thirty years of age!—Ah, Madam! if you had seen him as I did yesterday in a wretched cottage in the suburbs of the town, dressing the putrid sores of a poor day-labourer, whose little family were crying round their miserable parents for bread, among whom he generously distributed ten guineas, you would have blessed him for his goodness.—But he is always searching out some unhappy object.”

You may believe, my Harriet, this long harrangue by no means prejudiced me in the *dis-favour* of the above gentleman;—but to put an end to the subject, I told the prating, but good-natured

18 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

tured woman, I chose to be then alone, having letters to write. She curtisied, and withdrew,—and then, my Harriet, I took myself severely to task.

Never till that day did the folly, the absurdity, I know not what to call it, of passing for a married woman, appear in such strong colours.—Ah! my dear, I see—I see now plainly I was blameable. As you very justly observed, the most *innocent* deception is *wrong*, and must be *wrong*, because it *is* a deception.—You rightly say, there is nothing like the plain path of truth; and yet I, knowing this, must involve myself, forsooth, because I had not difficulties enough upon my hands, in a falsity!—

Hea-

Heavens! I am astonished that such a thought should ever enter my head!—and what is still more vexatious, I must now go on with the deception at least whilst I am here; as now to *unsay*, what I have declared myself to be, would be owning myself no better than a downright cheat at once, and doubtless raise more strange suspicions of me, than I find already these mistaken, deceived people imagine.—Mr. Harley thinks it strange!—Well, let him think so.—Odd and mysterious it certainly must appear.—O truth—thou god-like *virtue*! never more will I deviate, however justifiable the cause, from thy strictest precepts.—Good heavens! I am astonished at my folly. I might have altered

altered my name, and that would have answered every end—but to say I was married!—— and then to be so very pettish, so peevish with this poor woman!—Why?—only because she innocently *believed* what I had *told* her. Indeed, Harriet, I am a very sad girl. Tell me no more, my friend, of my virtues, and my goodness, and I know not what:—but it is you who spoil me. My heart is, I find, vain, wayward, and deceitful.——Well, says the inspired writer, “the heart is desperately wicked who can find *it out*?”

But to return to this humane man.—
 “What man?” you ask.—Why—Mr. Harley.—He has continued his visits
 some

some days, and I shall soon have no farther need of his aid. Every day he appears, if possible, more amiable:—but there seems a kind of melancholy thoughtfulness about him, which it is impossible to describe:—a kind of delicate reserve. I have not yet heard him speak ten sentences; but ah, my dear, there is more good sense in those few words, than in a day's trifling conversation of the pert, unmeaning coxcombs, with which the world so much abounds.

Mr. Harley, from mere *curiosity*, I fancy, wants to pick out who, and what I am. The moment I begin to speak, he listens with such earnest attention!—though I have spoken but little the whole

22 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

whole time, my spirits are so funk, and I am so ashamed of this appearance of my *wedding ring*, which more than once I have observed this amiable man *eyes* with no small attention, that I have no heart to begin a conversation on the most common topic. Besides, I am convinced, from his extreme reserve, that he thinks me perhaps a woman of a suspicious character. Even in my dress (so cautious should we be of outward appearance) there is something strange and inconsistent. — This day I observed some embroidered slippers, which, in my hurry, I brought away in my small bundle, and now wear, attracted his astonishment: as must a fine pair of Bruffel's laced ruffles I had on,

with

with the impropriety of a coarse apron I have purchased since my escape:—these inconsistent appearances, I now plainly perceive, cannot fail to attract the eye of every beholder.

Think, my dear, of my extreme mortification, when this morning he took my hated left hand, on which is this fatal *ring*; and after tenderly examining my fingers, which had been much bruised, and particularly whilst he was bathing *that*, on which is the *ring*, he addressed me in his humane manner with “I hope, Mrs. Johnson, you feel no pain from this application?—” I started at the odious name of Johnson, and my confusion prevented my reply.—I have no doubt

24 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
doubt but that he looks upon me in the
light of an unhappy young creature,
ruined by an imprudent marriage:—or,
what is most likely, imagines I am se-
duced.—This last thought gives me in-
finite inquietude. But why should it,
since he can never be any thing to me?

I wonder, my dear, whether this Mr.
Harley is a married man:—but most
likely he is.—Mrs. Mills has never, I
think, dropped a hint he has a wife, and
yet her tongue is voluble enough upon
all other subjects:—but it is most pro-
bable to imagine he *is* married:—or,
perhaps, going to be so; as it is almost
impossible to suppose but that he must
before now have engaged his affections,
and

and have fixed his choice ; and a man so amiable, with a character so unexceptionable, must be approved:—a large fortune too has lately fallen to him.—But what is all this to me, I repeat?—therefore not another word about him.

I ought indeed to be ashamed of myself, that I have written so long a letter, without yet having thanked my generous, my excellent friend, for her extreme kind offer of assisting me, as to money matters:—No, my beloved Harriet, talk not, I beseech you, of sending what you mention: your unexampled generosity distresses me above expression. Whether your poor Lucy may live to see happier days she knows

26 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

not; but, however that may be, she hopes you will live to wear, and *adorn* those ornaments you would so nobly bestow to relieve her distresses. Yes, my sweet girl, may those rings you mention continue to glitter with double lustre on your dear hands, whilst mine must be employed, in earning, from painful industry, my daily support.

I grieve for your disagreeable situation;—but come, my dear, let us still hope for better days.—You know,

“ Though prest by ills, and exercis’d in care ;

“ Yet never let the noble mind despair.”

With this sentimental scrap of advice I will conclude my long letter, and assure

sure you, I am ever my dearest Harriet's

Most tenderly affectionate,

LUCY.

P. S. I charge you to write very soon, and yet how needless is that injunction! A letter from you, my dear, will raise my dejected spirits. Indeed they are much sunk. This man certainly has a strange opinion of me; and, you know, one does not like to be suspected.

28 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

Miss WOODLEY to Miss SIDNEY, under Cover, to Mrs. JOHNSON.

Woodley-House.

WHY would my Lucy suffer her Harriet to endure a painful fortnight's anxious suspense?—But be gone, my fears, “I give you to the winds,” since my beloved friend assures me she is well in health. I tremble for the account you give of the hurts and bruises you have sustained by the unfortunate fall you mention.—Heaven guard you from another wound that will not soon be healed!

And

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 29

And so, Lucy, you now begin to repent of the folly of passing for a *married* woman!—"You are now fully convinced that the most *innocent* deception is *wrong*."—Ah! my dear! you must indeed give me leave to smile; and likewise give me leave to see the *reason why*, on the sudden you are become so *extremely scrupulous*!—Allow me, my sweet friend, to *observe*, that had you never seen this Mr. Harley, whom you describe to be so very amiable, you would still have enjoyed the little innocent stratagem of passing for a *wife* (though I cannot say *I* ever approved of it) and not have "started at the odious name of *Johnson*." Your sudden peevishness to the good-natured woman

you mention, must all be ascribed to the same cause:—for why, otherwise, should you have been so very anxious what either she, or Mr. Harley, had said of you? But to be serious, for there is an air of tender melancholy in your letter which makes me fear for your too susceptible, though, till *now*, *untouched heart*; and which awakens in mine, the most painful anxiety, lest my sweet girl, added to her other distressful perplexities, should have the aggravated misery of *entangling* herself in an *hopeless passion*; for, *hopeless*, my dear, it must undoubtedly prove. You cannot *now*, as you justly observe, *unsay*, what you have affirmed concerning your marriage; (which is another of the blessed effects

of

of the deception) and, certainly, the particularity of your living in so concealed a privacy, (though the motives of it are so *glorious* to my admirable friend) must have a mysterious appearance, which may not probably be much to your advantage in the opinion of Mr. Harley : therefore, under these disagreeable circumstances, let your Harriet beg, let her intreat you, my dearest, not to give way to the least soft, or tender impression in his favour. I know (for has a single thought, a wish arose in the spotless bosom of my Lucy, which she has not communicated to the friend of her soul ?) that your innocent heart has *till now* remained *untouched*. You have, hitherto, with the most perfect

32 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

indifference, heard and refused many advantageous offers, young as you are ; but yet I know that, from the extreme sensibility, the delicate tenderness of your mind, when you *do* love ; and, alas !—start not my dear—I fear that time is now arrived ; you will suffer all that such exquisite *feeling* as yours must consequently experience. You see, my Lucy, I am acting the part myself of a good surgeon, in baring wide the wound before I administer the *healing* medicine. Little should I deserve the sacred name of *friend*, did I not endeavour to warn my dear girl of her present danger ;—for the more good and worthy the object of your attachment is, to a mind so virtuous as yours, the more will it
be

be involved in perplexity. Let me conjure you, my Lucy, then, to beware how you indulge one moment the soft delusion. It will, perhaps, at first, appear to you no other than as a just deference paid to the merit of a worthy man;—but ah, my Lucy, young and unexperienced as I am, as well as yourself, we need not be told (from what miserable examples we daily see of *hopeless* passion) how soon what at first appears only an innocent, laudable sentiment, soon, too soon, alas! becomes an exquisite torment!

You mention being particularly struck with the humanity of this gentleman; perhaps he may have as large a share of

34 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

it as you imagine; though I believe it is a virtue more commonly *assumed* than *really* possessed. We must not think a man *humane*, merely because the duties of his *profession* oblige him to appear so. You seem particularly struck by his dressing the foes of a poor wretch:—why, my dear, does not the business of his life, his profession, oblige him to this?—When sent for on these occasions, can he refuse to attend?—Far be it from me to depreciate the merit of Mr. Harley, or to lessen his worth; but I will maintain, that a man is by no means always *merciful*, for doing *merciful* actions, any more than a *divine* must be *good*, because he preaches up the moral duties. Alas! my dear, we know,

I am

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 35

I am sorry to say, too many examples to the contrary. Witness, how much, you may remember, we were pleased with the heavenly charity, as we thought it, of a certain reverend gentleman of our acquaintance, when on entering a poor cottage, in our village, we found him praying by the bedside of a miserable dying wretch. We both, if you remember, at once exclaimed, what a divine office, what god-like piety, to soothe the pangs of the departing soul! —But ah, my dear, how soon did our indignation take place of all the fine notions we had of this reverend gentleman, when we were informed, some time afterwards, that it was with the utmost difficulty, and after repeated entreaties,

and the absolute commands of his patron Lord B——, that he could be prevailed on to leave the quadrille-table, and the ladies, long enough to say those few short prayers which we then thought so extremely meritorious!—I only mention this little incident to remind you, how much we may be mistaken in our opinions of the *motives* of peoples actions. But your *own* heart, whose every impulse is guided by the noblest generosity, and most tender feelings of humanity and compassion, leads you to imagine every *other* heart is guided by the same benevolent principles. Restrain, then, I beseech you, the generous sentiments of your own mind, which leads you to magnify the virtues of every

every other person, whilst you forget your own ; forget that, from your own *real* unbounded *humanity*, (till you was driven by the vilest of wretches from your hospitable mansion) you made the widow's heart to sing for joy, and wiped the tear from every eye.—O may those blissful days again return !—when I may again fold to my throbbing breast my angelic friend !—Again listen to her instructive, her delightful conversation ; —and together visit the ivy bower, the little hermitage, and every beloved spot, sacred to friendship and retirement !

I tremble for my sweet girl, lest she may have unhappily fixed her affection on a man *already* married. You know
not

38 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

not but he may have a wife and a little brood of children. Never tell me, that you have not more than a partial esteem for him.—Alas! my dear, I am much mistaken if you have not (though perhaps as yet unknown to yourself) sentiments of the most *tender* kind. But, for heaven's sake, my Lucy, consider; reflect on the misery you will accumulate to yourself, if, added to your other misfortunes, you should involve your tender heart in this hopeless passion: for *hopeless* it must prove; as it is more than probable so amiable a man, as you describe this to be, must, before now, have fixed his choice:—it is, indeed, almost impossible, to suppose it otherwise.—Besides, he must look upon you
in

in the light of a married woman, which is sufficient to check any partiality on his side, if he is a man of any honour. Refrain, therefore, every tender sentiment in his favour, lest you should be *ruined*, as a favourite author prettily remarks, by a *good man*, after having so gloriously preserved your virtue from a *bad one*.

Do not you smile, Lucy, at my pretending to dictate, and to give my advice?—"I thank you, *wise* Harriet, you cry, for your sage admonitions; but I am in no danger."—But say what you will, I *must* endeavour to root out of your heart sentiments which will prove so fatal to your peace for ever.

You,

40 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

You, my Lucy, cannot love with *indifference* — and, oh! I grieve at the dreadful idea of your being entangled in a hopeless passion!

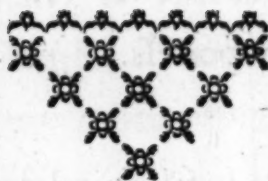
I figure to myself those visits which you say pass in almost absolute silence on both sides. I think I see *you* sit blushing, and looking down with silent shame on the fatal *ring*, whilst your amiable visitant is standing by, perhaps, in the same awkward confusion.— But, pray, my dear, do not imagine that the profound silence of this man *must* proceed from extreme *delicacy*, since *pride* may, perhaps, be at the bottom.—You know a favourite author of yours, in his advice to his daughters, says,

says, "That where there is great *delicacy*, there is always great pride; and that you may *break*, but never *bend* such a mind."—So that the delicate reserve you mention of his, may perhaps, after all, be nothing but *downright pride*.—"Ill-natured, censorious Harriet, you cry, will you allow him nothing?"—Yes, my dear, I will allow him every thing but *your heart*, which is too precious a jewel for any man in this world to possess.

You grieve me beyond measure, that you will not permit me to send you my useless *trinkets*.—Can I allow the diamond to glitter on my idle hands, whilst those of my charming friend are employed

42 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
employed in earning her daily bread?
No, I never can.—Adieu! write, I
charge you, and may heaven direct you
for the best, prays your faithful

HARRIET.



Mij's

Miss SIDNEY to Miss WOODLEY.

Town of ———.

“**C**ENSORIOUS Harriet!” — No, my best, my excellent friend, be assured I look on your kind remonstrances, so far from the light of censure, that I am convinced they are the dictates of the most tender affection, and exalted friendship.—I have been strictly taking to task this wayward—this too susceptible heart of mine, and be assured it shall sooner break than entertain sentiments unworthy of the approbation of my generous, my admirable

able Harriet. — But, my dear friend, there is no great fear at present, that I should be *entangled* in this hopeless passion, for which your tender heart is so very anxious on my account, as I am just now displeased with Mr. Harley; or, rather, my pride is piqued.

No, no, my dear :—indeed your fears have been in vain.—You need not be under the least apprehension that I shall die for love of this man, take my word for it.—I now plainly see him in his proper light. Haughty—proud—and—but, however, he is not a *married* man, as I sometimes since discovered by Mrs. Mills, who kindly brought me a basket of fruit, and asked me if I had

not

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 45

not been much disturbed all the morning by the noise of bells which had been ringing for a fine wedding there had been in the town?

“What wedding?” said I, “eagerly.”

“Why, Madam, a gentleman in this street was yesterday married to a lady, whose sister Mr. Harley——.”

“What?—who? (said I—seized with a foolish tremor, imagining she was going to tell me Mr. Harley was married to this sister of the lady) whose sister did he marry?”—“Marry, Madam?—he is not married, nor never will,

46 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

will, as all the world says, he is so difficult;—so hard to be pleased,—There must be an angel from heaven, or some being formed on purpose, he is so very delicate in his choice.—We have here a number of pretty ladies, some dying for him, and all ready to pull their caps about him:—but his hour is not yet come, as the saying is:—he don't seem to be that way inclined.—He seems to set all love at defiance, but what leads him to assist his fellow creatures in acts of kindness; and there he indeed —.”

“ Come, good Mrs. Mills, (said I in a most wonderful good humour, on the sudden, for which you, *My* Harriet, will easily know the cause) come, sit down,

down, and take the fruit out of your basket.—But—but—you was saying this lady's sister who is married—what of her?"

"O, only, Madam, that her sister married a relation of Mr. Harley's some time ago."

"Is that all? (replied I, in mighty high spirits) but, good Mrs. Mills, once more I beg you will sit down: we have had no chat a long time."—

You cannot oblige some people more, Harriet, than by asking them to *talk*.—

"What have you flowers in you basket too?"

"O,

48 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

“ O, yes, Madam, but I must carry the basket again, for Mr. Harley may perhaps want it.”

“ Mr. Harley (said I, blushing) why what is it to him ?”

“ Madam, he sent these strawberries, and these roses, for your acceptance. He was standing this morning at his garden gate, and his servant being gathering fruit, he ordered me to take home this basket filled as you see.— Perhaps the lady (said he) Mrs. Mills, at your house, may like a few strawberries in her state of *confinement*, and if she is fond of flowers, pray carry her these.”

“ I am

“ I am much obliged to him.—In my state of *confinement* did he say ?” That moment my chatty friend was called away, which put a stop to our conversation.

This little incident happened before I found myself so much piqued with Mr. Harley, as I am at present : but in order to lead to it, I must tell you, that about a fortnight ago, I found myself disordered with a slight fever, and some symptoms of a sore throat, to which complaint you know I am frequently subject. Mr. Harley, that day, making me a visit, and observing my complaint, (for though *reserved*, he is *polite*) I told him, nothing but bleeding would be of

service, which remedy I often used in that disorder.—He seemed, I know not why, I thought rather disconcerted; and declined, though very politely, performing the operation: though this, my dear, is not the quarrel I have against him. He told me my spirits seemed so extremely low, that he was fearful an operation of that kind would still increase my lowness. I answered, with some hesitation, that my spirits had been lately a good deal hurried:—to this he seemed to listen attentively; and, after my again pressing the operation, he fixed the next morning for that purpose.

He came; but, ah! Harriet, what could the man mean, by appearing in
such

HISTORY OF Miss SIDNEY. 51

such apparent confusion when he approached me? Mine I fear was too visible; for on his tenderly enquiring after my health, I was seized with such a tremor, I thought I should have fainted. This he observed, and asked me, why I trembled?—Do not you think, Harriet, he was indelicate to take notice of my little disorder?—He stood seemingly lost in thought for a few moments, and by this time I had sufficiently recovered myself to beg him to proceed with the operation. He accordingly took my hand with an air, I thought, of particular tenderness. After some time examining the veins in my arm, he was suddenly seized with a tremor himself, which however he would

52 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

not own, but with an aukward confusion told me, that he would retire to the window, whilst I recovered myself more perfectly. He accordingly retired to the window, where he stood some minutes; during which, the most profound sigh escaped him:—yes, my dear, Mr. Harley sighed:—at the same time he turned half round, whilst with a look of the utmost humanity: and yet I thought it was attended with that kind of mingled scorn and pity, which a good mind feels for the frailties of the blameable. His sighs seemed to say, “Ah, poor, seduced, young creature! —I pity your distress, whatever it be, as I would extend my compassion to any other deluded wretch—but no other

other sensations do I feel for you, than the meer suggestions of common humanity." This sentiment, I imagined, Mr. Harley's look and sighs expressed : and this favourite line, (the image of a good mind) I at that moment applied to his :

" There dwells the *scorn* of vice, and *pity*
 " too."

It is almost impossible to convey to my Harriet an adequate idea of what that moment I endured : convinced as I was, that, from outward appearances, and from many circumstances, there was great room to think I was of a *suspicious* character. And though I knew

I was innocent as innocence itself, yet so unfortunately, so delicately was I circumstanced, there could be no opportunity of clearing myself. But to proceed.

My little flutters, as well as Mr. Harley's, being now abated, he proceeded with his operation; which having finished, he was preparing to depart; and having told me before that my bruises were so much better, as to require no farther of his assistance; and his extreme silence (*pride*, if you, Harriet, *will* have it so) mixed with a sort of disdain for a woman of a dubious character (as I am convinced he thinks me to be) made me resolve to pluck

up so much spirit, as then to determine to take my leave of him, and to present him with an handsome gratuity for his skill and attendance. Accordingly, I presented him with five guineas (though more than half of what I have for my support) and begged his acceptance of it for the trouble he had been put to during his attendance. He stared as if surprized; — and putting back my hand, though with much politeness, begged I would think of making no return, for that what he had done, was so very trifling, it required none. A kind of contest now ensued, — in which I told him, that what I offered, was more suited to my own, at *present*, contracted circumstances, than

to his deserts.—But, added I, with all the pride of suspected virtue, “I must *insist*, Sir, on your acceptance of this trifle.—If I am *poor*, I am *proud*.”

“I hope, Madam, (he replied) you
 “are *neither*.—My chief happiness in
 “this world consists in being of as
 “much service in *general*, to my fel-
 “low creatures, as I can, without any
 “view of present advantage. In this
 “case, however, I *will* receive no other
 “reward than the pleasure of assist-
 “ing you:—but I will call again in a
 “day or two, and enquire after your
 “health.”

He

He was now got to the door, and after again repeating he should call the next day, left the room in a kind of abrupt indifferent manner, which I cannot describe. I felt my pride excessively hurt by his refusal of my fee; and his expression of delighting to be in *general* of service to the community, made no small impression. Did the man imagine but for *that* clause, I should have taken the compliment to myself? No, indeed!—he is much mistaken. Possibly Mrs. Mills has informed him, that I am a person in distress;—as last week I desired her to procure me some work from one of the milliner's shops, which she readily did; but I plainly perceived that the request

served to increase her surprize. I therefore judged it necessary to tell her, that my remittances from my husband abroad were very uncertain. — Ah, my Harriet! if once we deviate from the strict path of truth, though in the smallest article, (and heaven knows my innocent deception was calculated to injure no one) how many more little falsities will it naturally lead one to be guilty of, in order to support the first deception! — but never more will I err in that point, let what will happen.

Mr. Harley has, I doubt not, been informed by the loquacious Mrs. Mills, of the discovery I have made of my distress; for when I offered the gratuity,

tuity, he seemed struck with the utmost surprize.

But now, my dear, I am coming to the cause of the pique I have conceived for this man.—I do not like to be treated with premeditated neglect by any one.—Your Lucy, my Harriet, has still so much pride left (sunk as her fortune, and contracted as her views must now be) as not to resent the disdainful air which appeared in Mr. Harley, in his last visit :—but what I most am angry with him for is, that he never has had the common civility (notwithstanding his solemn promise of seeing me most certainly in a day or two) to call on me from that time to this :—not

60 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

once. This, I must confess, I think unhandsome, not to say rude:—he might at least have enquired at the door how my health was.—Did he imagine I should be too vain for such a favour?—or that I should look upon myself as peculiarly esteemed by his further notice?—Not I indeed.—There is a particular neglect in this rude behaviour of his, which I own has *nettled* me extremely.—I now recollect the indifferent, abrupt air with which he left me last:—indeed it was so very apparent, that I could hardly restrain myself from exclaiming,—“Stop, Sir, you are greatly mistaken in your opinion of me:—I am not the vile wretch you imagine,

imagine, but a poor unfortunate, a fugitive from villany and baseness."

I now see the odious, the detestable light in which I have appeared to him, and I abhor myself.—But as an object of distress, he might still have continued his visits:—I should have given myself no airs of consequence upon it. Ah! Mrs. Mills, you too, are much mistaken as to his *uncommon* humanity, and that the business of his life was searching out objects of *compassion*. No, no, my dear, *pride*, I now see plainly, is his distinguishing characteristic.—You was right, my Harriet, in your conjectures of this man.—How do I congratulate myself, that my eyes at last

last are opened!—In love, indeed!—No, my friend:—not so much as a grain of partiality have I remaining for Mr. Harley.—This neglect of his is a lucky incident, as it has perfectly enabled me to divest myself of the favourable opinion I once entertained for him; and which in time might have betrayed me into a softness which might have ended in, what you call, an *entangled*, an hopeless passion.—But, thank heaven, I love no more—it will not hurt me, Harriet.—Love!

“ Long since I gave it to the passing winds.”

Yes, my Harriet, I thank heaven my heart is free.

“ Nay

“ Nay, had it been,

“ As much enthrall’d, and soft as her’s who fits,

“ In secret shades, or by the falling stream,

“ And wastes her being in unutter’d pangs,

“ I would have broke or cur’d it of its fond-

“ nefs.”

Indeed I am at this moment quite out of humour with the whole sex; and I believe they may, with no great degree of injustice, be ranked in the two distinguishing classes of *knaves*, or *fools*.

—You will, perhaps, think my present pique dictates this sarcasm; but indeed, Harriet, I am serious. How many do we see of the vile turn of Sir Harry Beaumont!—and how many sanctified hypocrites conceal their specious vices
under

64 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
under the seeming virtues of humanity,
generosity, and justice!—Heavens!

“ That a man should smile, and smile,
“ Yet be a villain !”

In short, I renounce them all,—but
chiefly I renounce Mr. Harley.

This moment enters the servant maid
Peggy with a letter for me, superscribed
to—Mrs. Johnson. Detested name!—
The hand writing I know not—it is
not my Harriet’s;—whose can it be?—
No mortal knows of my concealment.
—Heavens, how I tremble!—the seal
I know not,—and from London too!—
No one there, I am convinced, can
know of my being at this place.—Hah!
do I see!—subscribed H—— Har-
ley?

ley?—Gracious heaven support me!—
Yes, indeed it is from him.—How
great is my astonishment!—O Harriet!

I have now read the contents, and
am petrified with wonder. I transcribe
it for your perusal; and read it here if
you please.

Mr. HARLEY to Mrs. JOHNSON.

London.

MADAM,

YOU will possibly be much sur-
prized at the freedom of the following
lines, and I fear equally displeased with
the unhappy man who presumes to write
them; who (though added to a thou-
sand

and agonizing pangs, which at this moment tear his soul) feels none so great as the fear that his apparently rude, and negligent behaviour in not waiting on his amiable patient, according to his promise, must have occasioned her displeasure, as well as excited her wonder; — but ah, Madam, how miserable must that wretch be, who to excuse himself from one crime, must acknowledge that a still greater was the unhappy occasion of it! — Can you pardon me for daring to confess — but, oh, what language is sufficient? — I cannot — must not write it: — but it is something more than the utmost severity of my fate could have inflicted. Be not alarmed, most lovely woman, by imagining

gining that I am daring to make a confession of my guilt.—No, eternal silence on that head, shall for ever seal my lips; nor shall my trembling hand offend your delicate mind, whilst it vainly attempts to paint the agonies of my soul. Believe me, Madam, I would not so much as excite your pity;—but surely the eternal punishment I have inflicted on myself may, in some small degree, merit your forgiveness; when I inform you, that I have torn myself for ever from a place where there might be a possibility of ever beholding you more;—that I have left—for ever—every scene, which might too probably recall your dear, your fatal image, to my remembrance:—this, I hope, will
in

68 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

in some measure lessen my guilt.—My guilt, I repeat; for, ah! Madam, though I soon, too soon, alas, for my misery in this world, saw by the fatal pledge of your faith, (the ring on your lovely hand) that fate had given you to another;—that by the unalterable decrees of heaven and earth, you never can be mine, (and O may every blessing attend the happy man to whom you are united by such indissoluble bonds!) yet I own the dreadful conflict was even more than my reason could support.—A thousand times I was going to throw myself at your feet, and implore your pardon;—till a sudden resolution, with which heaven inspired me, determined me to seek my ease by flight; as in
vain

vain had every amusement proved ;—
in vain the duties of my profession ;—
in vain had company, music, books,
presented their usual relief ;—absence—
eternal absence—and the lenient hand
of time can only sooth the soft inchant-
ment. Besides my most miserable—
my unhappy—what shall I call it?—
might perhaps (pardon my vanity) have
caused the sigh of pity—which might
have led in time to —. O I must not
name it—but it might have awakened
sensations in the breast of the most love-
ly woman upon earth, which might—
alas ! have rendered her as wretched as
myself. No, Madam, doomed as I am
to perpetual misery, may you be hap-
py,—supremely so, in the possession of
the

70 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
the man to whom you are united by
the most sacred ties, whatever becomes
of the wretched Harley.—I am much
too delicate in my sentiments, to injure
what I love :—or even to ask for that
pity which cannot be consistent with the
nicest sense of honour.—Pardon my
abrupt departure, when last I saw you.—
And O pardon the dreadful *cause* of
my such seeming neglect.—But will you
style it rudeness?—cold indifference?
rather call it the utmost effort of rigid
virtue, to banish for ever from my breast
the idea of the lovely woman who is
dearer to mine, than are the drops which
visit my sad heart. I have only to add,
that had it pleased heaven you had been
as free as myself from a prior engage-
ment,

ment, and I had been favoured by the least degree of partiality, believe me, Madam, my hand should have been offered to your acceptance, and my person and fortune laid at your feet.—The sincerity of this declaration, must make an atonement for its temerity.

May angels guard you.—My departure from England will be speedy:—but in whatever clime I may linger out the remainder of my wretched being, my unceasing prayers to heaven will be for your happiness, and I am enabled to say, for that of the happy man likewise, whose fate is united to yours.—Long may you *both* enjoy all earthly blessings:—whilst I—but, once more, adieu;
may.

72 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
may guardian angels take you to their
care, prays, and will ever pray,

Yours

H. HARLEY.

O Harriet—what a letter!—Have
you read it?—I have been weeping this
hour over the generous contents.—Ah!
poor, deceived Mr. Harley! what an
exalted, what a noble mind is here!—
But oh, the misery, the dreadful conse-
quence of my abominable deception!
—but for that, alas! I might soon have
been in peace and safety; protected by,
and happy in the possession of this most
excellent

excellent man!—Wretch that I am!—
 and oh, the miserable effects of falshood
 and deceit!—Let it be a warning to
 every young person, how she deviates
 from the strictest path of truth, how-
 ever justifiable the motive may appear.
 —Heavens! just heavens!—You see
 my Harriet, my punishment is evident-
 ly the immediate effect of my guilt.—
 O most egregious wretch, to pass for a
 married woman!—Ah! poor deceived
 Mr. Harley!—banished!—leave Eng-
 land for ever!—no—not for ever!—
 but what remedy now?—Alas! alas!
 there can be none:—and eternal misery
 must be my portion.—I shall run dis-
 tracted.—Harriet, do you not shudder
 at my daring to maintain so shameful

74 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

an untruth?—Ah! my sweet friend, you warned me,—you bade me beware, and shun deception, and all its *certain* train of inevitable evils; and I (wretch that I am) had not a sufficient share of miseries to encounter, but I must, with my eyes open, involve myself in this intricate perplexity?—Had I not poverty, the dread of a thousand evils to combat, but I must run into all the horrors of a falsehood?—How could I, who have always shrunk at the least shadow of an untruth, dare to pass on the world—to these poor, deceived, innocent people, in a feigned character! where learned my unpractised heart in guilt, the ready lye, the atrocious falsehood, that was to plunge me in such

a laby-

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 75

a labyrinth of woe?—of *lasting* heart-felt woe!—Was it distress?—Ah, no, my friend, it was fear, base fear, and a distrust of the Divine Providence (though it had so gloriously exerted itself in my favour) that led me, wicked girl! to the low, the base design of seeking safety from discovering my real name, by a false stratagem. But oh, my Harriet, the stings of fell remorse!—Am I not a vile impostor? and can you love me, my dear, after all this?—I see, I now see it was distrust of the Almighty Power which has sunk me in this irremediable perdition. “Had I not *thee*, all powerful friend, and guardian of the

76 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
innocent; had I not *thee* to aid me,"
but I must descend to so vile an im-
position?—Nothing now remains, but
that I hide my shameful head in some
miserable obscurity, where I may lin-
ger out the remains of my wretched
life in poverty, and in all the various
miseries of remorse.

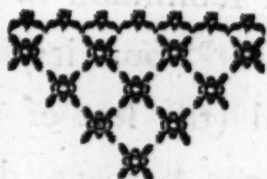
“ Mr. Harley fled to London!—
preparing to leave his native land!—
and I, the unhappy cause? — Ah
wretched Lucy Sidney!—but language
fails to paint my sufferings.—The only
man I ever did, or ever can regard
lost, lost for ever, and all through my
indiscretion!—But I can no more:—

HISTORY OF Miss SIDNEY. 77

in the height of remorse and distraction, I subscribe myself

Your miserable

LUCY.



E '3

Miss

Miss WOODLEY to Miss SIDNEY, under Cover, to Mrs. JOHNSON.

Woodley-House.

BE comforted my dearest friend:—
 let your Harriet beseech you to
 take to your aid those sentiments of
 patience and submission to the Divine
 Power, which your innocent, your
 spotless mind (the seat of purity) can
 never be one moment divested of.
 Why, my sweet girl, will you talk of
 remorse?—and why arraign yourself,
 as if you had in reality been guilty
 of the most capital crime in nature?

Alas!

HISTORY OF Miss SIDNEY. 79

Alas! my dear, the little stratagem you made use of, was calculated for the best:—for the cause of virtue:—it was intended to injure no one; and it was undoubtedly a proof of wisdom in my young friend, in her helpless, her distressed situation, to make use of every precaution which prudence could dictate. Cease then, my Lucy, to grieve at this incident, which as it is past, is irretrievable and vain. I know, my dear, how much your spotless mind is hurt by the least shadow of subterfuge and falsehood:—but give it not those appellations, I beseech you.

80 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

I know likewise how much that feeling heart of yours, the seat of tender sensibility, must suffer by the loss of this worthy man; (for such I see he is) and ah! my Lucy, I knew, I was convinced you always loved him. Indeed I wonder not you did. But, for heaven's sake, take not so heavily a misfortune, which it was as impossible to foresee, as now it is to prevent. I grant, your perplexity is distressful, but let me intreat,—let me conjure you not to add to it, by unavailing self-accusation and complaint. I see, as well as yourself, the advantages which might have accrued to you, in your present disagreeable situation, if
there

there could have been a possibility of your union with Mr. Harley: — but how know we, (poor short-sighted girls as we are) but that, had *such* an union taken place, the many evils you might have experienced in being deprived of him — perhaps by sickness; — perhaps have lost his heart by inconstancy; for is he not a man, and therefore must be inconstant? Ah! Lucy, take my word for it, you would in the latter case, have suffered even more severely than you do at present. But is it not the part of *friendship* to *advise*, as well as to *sooth* and *comfort*? Let me consider, — let me reflect a moment, if this matter, this little vexatious deception cannot be cleared up.

82 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

Upon my word, my dear, was I you, and surely I am too much my Lucy's, not to feel most intimately, and as my own, her every distress; I would instantly set about clearing up this affair: nay, indeed, I think you ought. I would write to Mr. Harley, my dear: his noble, his generous behaviour, demands that you should be equally open and explicit in return. I would unfold my whole story. I would disclose to him the whole deception, and the glorious motives which induced you to practice it. I would, by the most open declaration of the cause of my concealment, wipe at once off, all those unfavourable suspicions, which those little inconsistencies that have appeared in
your

your state of *privacy*, must have unavoidably created.

This I would most certainly do; nay, I think in justice you ought. You will have a thousand scruples of delicacy, I know, on this occasion:—you will say it is taking shame to yourself; but pray, my dear, is it not better to acknowledge an error, than to *abide* in it? Or shall I, my Lucy, write to this man, and declare to whom, my noble friend (the pride of my heart) owes her distinguished birth, her family, and connexions; as well as inform him of the meritorious, the glorious cause of her concealment? Perhaps this might come better from my pen than my

84 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

Lucy's. Tell me, that you approve of this, and my farther advice is, that it be done without delay. You will then, my dear, have removed all these heart-rending scruples from your delicate mind, which, conflicting with your exact rectitude, *barrows* up your soul amidst such a complicated scene of perplexities.

How shall I tell my sweet friend—(and yet I must inform her) that soon, very soon, my uncle, whose health is evidently worse every day, is ordered to the German Spa for his recovery?—and I, Lucy, (I grieve to write it) must accompany him. This he insists on, as my aunt is by no means in a
state

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 85

state of health proper to undertake so long a journey. I grieve most heartily that I must leave England (though I hope but for a few months) whilst your dear mind is in this state of perplexity and suffering: and whilst I might, by the comfort of sympathizing friendship, pour balm into your wounded mind by the frequent intercourse of letters. But, alas! if I remained in England, *that* must be our only comfort: as to see you is impossible:—and you will say we may still write, we may still maintain as minute a correspondence. But, ah! my friend, can I have a moment's happiness, whilst I know you are involved in this miserable perplexity?—Besides, it will be
such

86 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

such an age before our letters can reach each other! However, I charge you, to write more frequently, and more minutely than ever. Direct your letters to Woodley, from whence they will be sent to me in our *route*, in my uncle's packet:—But, ah! my Lucy, I shall think it an age before our letters will come to hand. From Dover, however, I will certainly write. I shall weary heaven with incessant prayers for my angelic friend.

Adieu, my much-loved Lucy. If I hear not from you by the return of the post, I shall conclude you do not approve of *my* writing to Mr. Harley; however, I beg *you* will. Pray, my
 dear,

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 87

dear, think of it:—indeed you ought, I say.—Are you sufficiently concealed where you are? or would not London be a better hiding-place?—---but you will manage with your usual discretion. The vile wretch at Ash Park has been making several short absences;----no one knows where he goes.---May heaven avert his ever discovering the place of your retreat! but to that heaven I commit my dearest friend, and will ever remain her

Most faithful and unalterable,

HARRIET.

P. S. I grieve for the thousand inconveniences you *must* be subject to
from

88 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

from your daily *decreasing* little stock
of cash.---I charge you to accept of
what I mentioned in my last.---Once
more adieu.



Mr.

Mr. HARLEY to CHARLES STANLEY, Esq.

London.

YOUR reproaches, my dear friend,
 for my late silence, would be
 converted into sentiments of the utmost
 compassion, if you knew the unhappy
 cause of it.----“ Compassion Harry,
 why, what is the matter?”---Nay, be
 not alarmed, my Stanley, but in sober
 sadness I am at this moment as miser-
 able a being as “crawls betwixt hea-
 ven and earth;” notwithstanding the
 large acquisition to my fortune, which
 I ima-

I imagine you have heard is fallen to me, by the death of my uncle;---but a more *interesting*, a more *heart-felt* subject than mere money-matters, (which to me, you well know, had never more attractions than as it gave me an opportunity of relieving every object of distress within my reach) must employ my pen.

The account you sent me from Bath*, merits all my confidence:---in return for that proof of sacred trust you reposed in me, I am going to communicate---an adventure I cannot call it ---a *misfortune*, which will, which must

* This letter appears not.

imbitter the remainder of my wretched
 days.----You start at this melancholy
 preface.—“For heaven’s sake (you cry)
 keep me no longer in suspense.” Well
 then,—in one fatal word,—I love,—I
 am absolutely dying for the most lovely
 woman in the universe; to whom it is
 impracticable I should ever be united.
 —Can it be possible, you ask, that I,
 who have always maintained my perfect
 liberty, though daily in the company
 of some of the most agreeable women
 in the kingdom, and in the “hourly
shot of eyes,” which has seldom failed
 of doing execution, should not only
 have remained heart-whole, but in a
 state of the most perfect indifference,
 till this fatal enchantment seized me for
 this

this charming woman; and what is still more astonishing, who she is, or what she is, to me is an inexplicable mystery.—Yes, Charles, I am become, in one unlucky hour, as “true a lover as ever sighed upon a midnight pillow.”—But how, in the name of Cupid, you will say, did this unfortunate attachment begin?—Have patience, my friend, and I will tell thee all;—will unfold the secrets of my heart. But ah, my Stanley, could you believe it possible, that I, who have made the severest precepts of virtue the constant practice of my life, should be sunk, lost, irrevocably lost, in the miseries of a guilty passion?—Could you imagine your Harley, who has ever looked

on *misery* as the sure, and never-failing consequence of *guilt*, should be plunged in the dreadful snare;—should be the unhappy victim of a criminal passion?—For ah, how shall I tell thee, that the enchanting object of my affection is—the property of another man—a married woman?—Heavens! but may the eternal punishment I have inflicted upon myself in this world, be an attonement for my crime:—for I have torn myself for ever from her sight:—with the fondest passion which ever entered the heart of man, I have doomed myself to a perpetual absence;—I have for ever left the town of ——— for a thousand reasons agreeable and eligible; but if I had remained there, as
it

94 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

it is at present the spot she inhabits, I must unavoidably have either seen, or at least heard more of this inchantress of my soul.—Nothing then remained for my honour, my future peace of mind, but flight—absolute flight. There is no *parlying*, my Charles, with a criminal passion. I honour virtue and ever did; and shall make it the unerring rule of my actions. I shall be unhappy, but I never will be wretched from guilt.—You, who have long laboured under the miseries of a hopeless passion (though not a guilty one) will know how to pity the fate of your miserable friend, and perhaps not think me so culpable as I think myself; for

I was

I was *taken*, my friend, by absolute surprise, as you shall hear.

I was, a few weeks ago, sent for to attend this lady;—but, good heavens; what was my astonishment, on being conducted to a little back chamber, in the house of a worthy poor family, to find there alone the finest woman I ever beheld!—But here all language fails. — Her form is elegance itself;—her enchanting eyes, her lovely face, (the seat of the most delicate sensibility) is equal to what we conceive, but can never describe, of an angel's sweetness.—I own I was struck; absolutely transfixed with wonder: her attitude was bewitching as her form.

She

She had been weeping:—her lovely cheek was reclined on her hand.—She wiped away the falling tears, and with the most graceful air of modesty begged me to be seated:—then endeavouring to recover herself from the confusion (which had a thousand charms) of a little tremor that affected her (and for which I could not account). She addressed herself to me in a manner so exquisitely elegant,—her every word so expressive of *meaning*,—her voice, harmony itself,—that I gazed,—and in that fatal moment was undone. I was indeed seized with the *rapidity* of *real* passion, for swift as “*lightening* the fatal arrow *flew*.”—But ah, my Stanley, what were the perturbations of my mind,

mind, when I was obliged to examine (from the occasion of my attendance) her lovely arm;—her bared shoulder!—The nameless, the infinite beauties I discovered in her enchanting form, equally excited my surprize and admiration.—Her modest confusion during my applying the proper remedies;—her timid blushes, — her bewitching sweetness,—all, all, my friend, conspired to render me, in that fatal moment, lost to peace for ever. But this I must say, in my own vindication, that I had no idea this lovely woman was the property of another man, till the moment she held out her charming hand, on which was a dreadful bruise, for my examination. Then it

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F

was,

98 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

was, and not before, I saw the sacred proof—the fatal ring—on her *wedded* finger*. Heavens!—What was my emotion! My trembling hand could but ill perform the office it was engaged in of applying the healing medicine. A sudden damp now seized my drooping spirits:—for, oh! my Stanley, I had the happy, the preceding minutes, inly determined (not

* We hope this little, and *seemingly* innocent deception of Miss Sidney, though calculated in her, for the best motives, will be a sufficient warning to my fair, and unexperienced readers, how they consent to *any* deception (be the motives ever so laudable) lest it should cause as perplexing a mistake, as the above affair occasioned.

dream-

dreaming of a prior engagement in so young a creature) to make her mine for ever. Who, alas! knows not the rapidity of *real passion*! On this heart-felt discovery I could hardly stammer out the common compliment of saying, "If I could be of further service—if my future help was necessary—I would very gladly do every thing in my power to assist her." But, gracious heaven!—how was I affected by her sensibility, when she suddenly, on my offering my services, burst into tears; and, politely thanking me, hoped she should soon have no occasion for my assistance!—There was in her enchanting manner, in her tone of voice, something inexpressibly affecting. I hastily

withdrew from this dangerous object; though it was impossible for me to avoid seeing her the next day, and for several days following, her recovery being not perfected: but in each of those fatal visits, I saw every day more to increase my wonder and admiration; but, forgive me, heaven, if I judge too rashly, whilst I own I fear (and yet, as you well know, I am not of a censorious turn) there is something very dark and mysterious in this lady's concealment. She certainly is a young creature of family;---and I imagine has eloped from all her friends. She seemed to be always in a state of terror, and starting at every sound, as if in fear of pursuit: in every visit I made
her,

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 101

her, I observed frequently her eye turned to the door, upon the least noise. She told me her spirits had been greatly hurried :---she had been often, by the servant of the house, seen to weep most bitterly, and wringing her hands, to exclaim " she was ruined and undone for ever *." The good woman of the house, who has known better days, and is both worthy and intelligent, told me (on my expressing my astonishment to find so beautiful and elegant a young

* Miss Sidney, though pure as an angel, had frequently in the unguarded, unsuspecting innocence of her heart, dropped the above expression, without knowing she did so, or even conceiving it could be taken in the above light.

ture alone, in such a situation) that she was herself equally amazed :---that she feared something was wrong in the conduct of her amiable guest,---that she had observed, as well as myself, the strange inconsistency even of her dress; (and yet, thou knowest, Charles, I am no connoisseur in those matters) such as her begging she would procure her some cloaths of the coarsest kind; whilst she observed her linen, and laces, were of extraordinary fineness and delicacy :---that she had taken notice the lady had deviated often in what she owned about her marriage *, some-

* It is the most difficult matter in the world to support for any time an untruth: poor Miss Sidney was not equal to the task.

times

times saying she should soon see her husband; — and other times that he would never return: — that she often contradicted herself in that matter, and often looked on her wedding ring, sighing bitterly, and exclaiming, would to heaven she had never put it on? * — and that sometimes the lady seemed to forget her name *was Johnson*: in short, that it was altogether strange, and not to be accounted for. Charmed as I was, and still am, with this lovely unknown, I must confess I thought these appearances (which are so much in her

* Mrs. Mills could not know Miss Sidney's real reason for this wish, *i. e.* her attachment to Mr. Harley.

104 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
disfavour) dark and mysterious.—Con-
cealment ever implies something wrong.
—That she is married I have no doubt:
—but why this fear of discovery? this
amazing privacy?—Some parts too of
her dress appeared as strangely incon-
sistent *. What could I think of the
prettiest foot in the world, in a gold
embroidered slipper, peeping from un-
der a petticoat of the coarsest stuff?—
or of the plain coif, evidently worn to
conceal the profusion of her fine hair;
the luxuriance of whose tresses would

* A caution this, to my young readers, how
much even the most trivial *outward* appear-
ances are to be attended to, as well as the more
essential parts of their conduct.

have

have adorned even the diamonds piercing lustre? What I repeat, can these appearances suggest to the most candid beholder?—Ah! my friend,—I fear,—I greatly fear, she is indeed some seduced, deluded girl, and now abandoned by her seducer. I have no doubt, but that she has a husband;—but her being merely married, could not on any occasion be the cause of her mysterious concealment. Does she secrete herself thus from her husband, or from whom?—No, no, my Charles, there is something *dark*, I fear, in these strange appearances,—something, I fear, which will not bear the *test* of an open scrutiny.—I would give the world to know who, or what she is.—I could reduce

myself this instant to immediate beggary, if it could be the means of saving her from farther perdition:—from farther ruin, I repeat; for, alas! from the above, and many more particulars, I have too great reason to fear her uncommon beauty, her youth, and perhaps unprotected innocence, has been the prey of some vile wretch of our sex; too many of whom would glory in first seducing, then exposing, and then deserting (inhuman cruelty!) to infamy and misery, the “*fond believing maid.*” I would not insinuate that I saw the least degree of levity in the behaviour of this lady;—very far from it:—if I had, you well know, I should have felt no sentiments for
her

her, but those of the most perfect contempt.

O, my friend, the faithful companion of my early youth, what would I give to see thee, to pour my sorrows into thy honest bosom!—Indeed, my Stanley, I am half distracted about this lovely woman. When I have stood lost in wonder, gazing with equal astonishment and delight, at the enchanting graces of her lovely form, and the nameless elegance of her person, I could hardly help exclaiming with Othello :

“ If she be false, oh, then heaven mocks it-
 “ self!——”

F 6

I have

I have (added to the strongest passion which ever man felt) the most raging curiosity to know, *who* the object of my passion is: but, alas! to me it avails not, whether she be *innocent* or not, as she is the *wedded wife* of another man. Gracious heaven support me to endure that cutting reflection!—In my unhappy case, *absence* must be my only remedy.—Had I seen this dangerous object more frequently, and had our slight acquaintance been improved into intimacy, I might, perhaps, in some fatal moment, have rendered her as guilty as myself; for I will not say it is impossible, but that she too might have cherished sentiments which might have led to the destruction of her future
 peace;

peace; for though no man had ever less vanity than myself, yet I own, had she been unengaged, the tender confusion, the gentle tremor, and sudden blush, which, whenever I approached her, I constantly observed, would infallibly have made me conclude I was not entirely indifferent to her. But, alas! knowing she *is* engaged, was it not more generous in me to renounce her forever, than to sooth, than to encourage these dangerous flattering appearances?

This poor unhappy girl — (I can write on no other subject) is, I find, by the people where she lodges, in distress. — Heavens! how is my compassion engaged! — I have been casting
about

110 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

about in my mind, how I might relieve and assist her wants, without hurting her delicacy. To work for her bread!—I cannot support the thought!—No, no, my friend, she must not, shall not want.—She is abandoned, I see plainly, by her seducer;—or perhaps by an infamous husband.—But, gracious powers of mercy which surround me, if I assist her, will you not approve the disinterested deed?—I have, therefore, by the last post, since I left the town she inhabits, sent a bank note of 30*l.* enclosed in a blank paper:—this will support her at least from absolute poverty; and it is impossible she should ever divine the *donor*; and before I leave the kingdom, which I am absolutely resolved

solved to do, I shall by some means double the sum, and send it to the poor unfortunate, as from an unknown hand. This cannot wound her delicacy, and may be the means of preserving her from farther ruin. This, to me, will be the highest, the most refined luxury ;— and how much is such a sacrifice to be preferred to the most guilty indulgence ! whilst I am wandering in some foreign distant clime, endeavouring to drive her powerful image from my half-distracted mind, I shall, at least, know she will not have the miseries of want to encounter. You have long known my sentiments with regard to the delicacy that is required in relieving the distressed. It is exactly indeed the
same

same with the elegant author of Sir George Ellifon, whose words on this subject are these: (alluding to the exquisite delight of keeping ourselves concealed from the objects of our bounty) “ If, therefore, we can remain unknown in the benefits we confer on the distressed, we enjoy the pleasure of seeing them relieved from all their wants, and have the secret satisfaction of knowing we have been the instrument of their happiness, and yet (if we see them) may converse with them without their feeling the least constraint, whilst they impart their designs without fearing our censure, and may ask our opinions with friendly freedom.—We can then give our advice without the danger of being
thought

thought to command in presuming on the influence which we may think our generosity ought to give us over their determinations. Unfortunately this cannot always be done; the hand that relieves must necessarily appear; but when we have the power of concealment, it would be blindness to our own happiness not to take advantage of it." These are exalted sentiments, little relished, or understood by the generality of the ostentatious world, but they are such, as I ever did, and ever will, strictly adhere to.

Perhaps you will blame me for having informed the lady by letter of my sentiments:—I could not help it.—

After

114 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

After a long struggle, my hand got the better of my more wise resolves, and involuntarily made a confession of my folly:—but, indeed, common civility, the usual forms of the world, required (as I could not, *would* not keep my promise of seeing her again, which on my leaving her last, I faithfully assured her I would most certainly do) that I should give some reasons for a behaviour so rude, abrupt, and unaccountable. I saw, my friend, I saw she was evidently hurt by my *indifference* — as *she* must term it; though, heaven knows, my heart was, at the dreadful moment of separation, torn with agonies.

You

You will at least, I hope, approve of my not seeking to avail myself of the tender *conflict* which (vanity apart) too—too often affected this lovely woman, even to a degree of seeming distress, whenever I appeared;—but I will not—must not indulge the thought, that I—(for madness is in that imagination)—*could* be the cause of all those nameless attentions, those tremors which shook her tender frame, those enchanting blushes;—no, rather I will conclude, I might perhaps bear a distant resemblance to some person with whom she has had a prior engagement to her happy husband;—or, perhaps, I may resemble outwardly her vile seducer, if by seduction she has been brought
into

116 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
into this state of distress and concealment *.

But not another word on the heart-felt subject.

I am now in London, having many affairs to settle relative to the death of my uncle—I will write again before I quit England. — Tell me that your health is better;—and that there are some hopes of your succeeding in the affair you have so much set your heart

* How much-unlike is this most excellent young man in his humble, his modest suggestions, to the vile vain impostor at Ash-Park, who, as all other men of his cast do, imagine every woman they see in love with them.

upon.

upon. Ah, my Charles! a feeling sensibility, like yours, or as that of your unhappy friend, is by no means a blessing to be coveted; for if we are merely happy ourselves, what do we not feel for the sufferings of others!

This lovely woman—what again! will my too anxious heart dictate no other subject to my pen?—No,—no other, but that I am,

Most faithfully yours,

H. HARLEY.

Miss

Miss SIDNEY, to Miss WOODLEY.

Town of ———.

MY Harriet going to leave England!—most grievous tidings!—And is there then, can there be no possibility of my having one glimpse before your speedy departure? No—there is none;—and the measure of my sorrows seem now compleatly filled, by this death-like absence of my most beloved friend. — But, alas! I ought not to lament this long journey of yours more than if you had still remained in England; for had you staid

at

at Woodley-House for seven years to come, I should not have been at all benefited by your dear presence:—still must your poor Lucy have remained a wretched exile from sweet Ash-Park; and still must she have endeavoured to content herself with the only method that remains of conversing with her valuable friend—that of writing:—and that, though

“ Rise Alps between us, and whole oceans
“ roll.”

can make not the least alteration, in a friendship founded on so strong a basis as ours:—a friendship founded on virtue, and a similarity of minds. And
what

120 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
what a noble proof, my generous Harriet, did you send me last week of the sincerity of yours! — A thirty pound Bank bill, enclosed in a blank cover, and lest I should suspect the too kind friend who sent it, you caused it to be directed in an unknown hand *?—Indeed, — indeed, my sweet girl, why would you do this?—I must down right chide you:—nay, was I near you, should beat you heartily. I am convinced that you must have ten thousand occasions for as much cash as you can collect together, on account of this journey:—an hundred expensive articles of

* Miss Sidney naturally concluded her friend the kind donor of the bill she received, as no one else knew of her concealment.

dress,

dress; will be necessary. Besides, you have, as you inform me, in a late letter, so generously assisted your brother, that I fear, my dear, you have laid yourself under great inconveniences to send me this kind relief:—but I see plainly how it is;—part of the sum you have received for your *finery* (and I am convinced your uncle, severe as he is in many articles, would have that adequate to your large fortune) you have, instead of bestowing it all on a rich silver petticoat, or some such matter, sent it to procure bread for your poor Lucy. Now do I know, that in the generosity of that benevolent heart of yours, you will deny you know any thing of the matter;—that is *so like*

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G

you.

you. Indeed, my dear, you have distressed me. Why — I repeat, would you do this?—The few little necessities of life I stand in daily need of, are easily procured, with which my needle cannot fail to assist me; and I assure you, for this last fortnight, I have worked day and night: but your bounty, my exalted friend, will make me a very idle girl again, if not quite a fine lady, and I fear it will make me forget I have *still* a livelihood to procure.



This moment I have received your
* kind billet from Dover.—Ah! my

* This letter appears not.

Harriet!

Harriet!—what seas by *this* time divide us!—and when shall we meet again? But it is some comfort, however, that we are determined to love each other, even though we should forget each other's faces. Your kind injunction of writing as minutely, and as *journal-like* as possible, I will most faithfully perform. And oh! my dear, would it were as possible for me to fulfil your other desire;—that of endeavouring to forget the only man that ever did, or ever can excite in me a sentiment of tenderness.—I will do all,—all,—my Harriet, that love-entangled reason can enable me to perform.—But why should you insist on my burning his letter?—No, let that proof of his generous,

124 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
disinterested passion, still remain:—it
will serve me to weep over, when the
amiable writer is, alas! wandering far
—far distant from his native land:—
and I, miserable, that I am the unhappy
cause of his absence! Be assured, I shall
use my utmost endeavours to regain my
former tranquillity;—but as to forget-
ting—no—no—my Harriet, that is im-
possible, for a heart

“ So lost—so pierc’d as mine !

“ Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,

“ How often must it love, how often hate ;

“ How often hope, despair, desire, regret,

“ Fear, love, disdain, do all things, but forget !”

And yet it has been always my opi-
nion, and still is, that this dreadful pas-
sion,

sion, which occasions so much misery in the world, and is productive of so many unhappy events, owes much of its strength to our own weakness; and that, if it was properly resisted in its very infancy, with the powerful aids of reason and religion, it might be so much restrained as not to render us either infamous, or unhappy.—If we poor mortals would only exert those powers, which the Almighty has bestowed on us, as a safe-guard from the passions, what numberless vexations, and miseries, should we escape!—But, alas! we too often yield at once to the blind impulse of this passion, from a persuasion it is not to be resisted.—Fatal mistake!—nursed by indolence, and cherished by weak-

ness, it grows too powerful to be combated; but if we would but firmly and resolutely oppose it in its infancy, it might easily be conquered.----And yet ---I fear, it will be long, very long, before I can have vanquished my own unhappy partiality :---but we are all of us so very wise, and love to preach, though we cannot practise (like some *other preachers* of a higher order) our own precepts.

You earnestly insist on my writing to Mr. Harley, to clear up my fatal deception.---Alas! my dear, it is impossible.---And how clear up?---What! confess that I have told a horrid lie, and that I have been acting in a
feigned

feigned character to deceive?—O no, my Harriet, I cannot do this: it would still be adding shame to shame: and, besides, what would it avail?—It would still make me appear in a more strange and suspicious light (and too much, I fear, I have already incurred suspicion) than I have yet appeared in.—No—there can be now no possibility of recalling what I have done.—First to say I am married, and then to deny it, would be a very odd, inconsistent tale: besides, it might appear to be a kind of tacit confession of an interested affection for him;—as much as to say, “Now I will throw off my deception, as I find I have so advantageous an offer of the heart of a man of fortune.”—And in-

deed, my dear, shame, that I have so long appeared in this odious, feigned character, prevents my owning the innocent, though to me fatal subterfuge. Your kind offer of writing, would be the same as writing myself.—No,

“ Nought now remains, but with relentless
“ purpose,

“ To shun——all clearing up

“ Of this dark scene; to wrap myself in gloom,

“ In solitude and shades, there to devour

“ The silent sorrows, ever swelling here.”

Besides, I know not where a letter might reach him.—He may, and has, I suppose, by this time, left England, perhaps for ever.—Ah, Harriet !

Your

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 129

Your bounty, my generous friend, will enable me to change the scene, which will be some little amusement to my distressed mind.—I intend soon to go to London, or to some village in its neighbourhood; as there, I should be equally concealed as where I am;—nay, perhaps, even more so: for though I believe Mrs. Mills a very good woman, yet her unbounded loquacity may lead her to talk of her lodger among some of the neighbouring families, which may excite a curiosity and suspicion, that might lead to disagreeable consequences.—In London, too, I might perhaps have a greater chance of constant work from the milliners shops; for do not imagine, now you have made me so rich by your

130 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

bounty, that I intend to squander away my money in any one superfluous article :—no, my Harriet, I shall be as frugal as possible of my little treasure : with part of it, I shall, perhaps, put myself into some small employment ;—with the remainder,——but I see, if “ riches increase, they are attended with cares :—witness, the sleepless hours I spent last night, in planning future schemes of managing your bounty.

But what do I see!—a large box, with two enormous hampers, brought into my apartment, directed to Mrs. Johnson !—Astonishing !—what is the meaning of this ?---The hand-writing of the direction I never saw before.

The

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 131

The man who brought them assure me, they are just arrived by the carrier from London.---It must be some mistake; and yet Mrs. Mills, and her maid, both inform me, there is no other person whose name is *Johnson* in the town, but myself.---Well, for once, curiosity shall prevail;---though my trembling hand will scarce enable me to assist in examining the contents.---Gracious heaven! ---what do I see? the box filled with linen!---and books, by the most elegant authors!---Shakespeare, Thomson, Milton!----Ah, Harriet, this is your doings*.----My generous, dear girl,

* Our fair incognita naturally attributed to her friend this noble present, though, in fact, it was sent by her generous, noble-minded lover.

why will you do this?----You really distress me---upon my word I am downright angry.----And so, in your passing through London, in your way to Dover, you gave orders for these things to be sent?---and that your kind intention should never be known,---which is so like you---not one line I see in the box. Bless me, my dear, why you have sent linen enough to serve me seven years! and all of the best kind.---Extravagant Harriet! and you was determined too that my mind should be amused with the writings of the most celebrated authors! ---But now for the hampers---bless us! ---one filled with wines!---the other with sugars, teas, and every elegant superfluity of life!

Indeed,

Indeed, my excellent friend, you give me pain, by your excessive kindness, and unwearied attention.---What can I say to you?---such transcendant generosity merits---but it is utterly impossible for mere words to express how much I am affected by your boundless liberality: though I could find in my heart to be half angry; but your generous *manner* of conferring your benefits doubly enhance their value. I may, indeed, truly say, that if “ my *prosperity* was the days of my shining-time---the *adversity* of a friend is *yours*; since you so gloriously exert the noblest virtues for my relief: ---such matchless generosity is indeed beyond every other excellence: it is, to use the expression of our favourite

Richard-

134 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
Richardson, "beyond justice, beyond
good-faith, and even charity:"---it is,
indeed, an assemblage of all the other
virtues and graces united---and surely
united they are, in the strongest degree,
in the noble mind of my Harriet
Woodley.---But I must be silent under
this mighty weight of obligation.

I will close here, and send this di-
rected as you mention. As you beg
me to be very minute, and particular,
in a further account of myself, I shall
begin another letter to my excellent
friend very soon, not waiting for your
answer, which may be detained by
contrary winds. How unfortunate!--
that my only remaining comfort, *that*
of

of hearing frequently from my Harriet, should by this unlucky incident, of your departure, be prevented;—but I must not, will not murmur:—whilst I still possess the inestimable treasure of your friendship, I cannot wholly be unhappy.

Adieu—adieu!—may every blessing attend you, is the predominant wish of your ever faithful, and I must add, grateful,

Lucy.

The

The same to the same.

Kensington.

SIX long weeks, my beloved friend, should not have elapsed without my writing, but, alas! I have been ill;—very ill.—A low fever, a few days after I wrote to you, attacked my spirits, which was so difficult to remove, that I have been, through extreme weakness, nearly reduced to the very borders of the grave. But I will not pain my Harriet's too generous heart, with the melancholy recital of my sufferings, as I am now pretty

pretty well recovered:—indeed, *almost* perfectly so.—You see by the date of this, that I have removed my situation; change of air was absolutely necessary after my illness; and I came to this place about three days ago. My disorder happened luckily whilst I was with Mrs. Mills, whose care and attention I shall never forget. The poor good woman wept bitterly at my departure: indeed I would not have left her, but for the reasons I mentioned in my last letter. I fixed upon Kensington preferably to London for my residence, as I thought the situation less confined, and the distance from thence is so short, that I can as easily procure employment from the shops, and

138 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
and as soon, as if I had taken up my
abode in the great noisy town, which
you know I always detested. I have
got a neat apartment (enabled by the
bounty of my Harriet to take so good
a one) in a large handsome lodging
house, which commands a delightful
prospect of Hyde Park and ———; H
tha
ful
on
the
dis
to
m
I
li
n
a
in
re
p
f
t
I
v
and this I chose in preference, on ac-
count of its air, to shutting up myself
in some little hole in an obscure street.
The people of the house seem oblig-
ing:—at present no one, I find, lodges
here but myself; a circumstance I am
not sorry for. The kind present of the
books you sent me, I find of infinite
service to unbend my mind: and my
sweet friend, you was determined too,
that

that I should not want another delightful amusement:—I mean my favourite one, of music; for in the bottom of the great box, most carefully packed, did I find a very elegant, and fine-toned guittar; with some choice, new music, for that instrument. What am I to say to you for all this?—Nobody living has the knack of conferring benefits like yourself:—this guittar I find a most sweet and soothing companion in my solitary hours. I have, since my recovery, amused my mind with composing a few airs, to words which I fancy are expressive of my forlorn state; though I ought not to call it so, whilst I have these amusements, which will wonderfully contribute to entertain me
after

after a day spent in virtuous industry. I was determined, on removing from my last abode, to leave behind me the detested name of Johnson; and also to take the fatal wedding ring from off my finger; and, O, that I had never consented to appear in the character of a married woman!—the miserable consequence of which fallacy (though heaven knows my motives were, I thought, highly meritorious) has involved me in a dreadful labyrinth of woe and perplexity.—But reflection comes now too late.

However, though I have left the name of Johnson, it was absolutely necessary I should call myself by any other

HISTORY OF Miss SIDNEY. 141

other than that of Sidney, and have accordingly at present taken upon me that of Seymour;—but as to passing again for a married woman—never—no—never will I run the dreadful risque of such another deception!

I wonder if poor Mr. Harley has yet left England; though I suppose he has long since.—But hushed be my sorrows—may blessings await him wherever he is. This moment I have a supply of work, I had sent for to the great milliner's in Bond-Street; therefore adieu, my dear, till next week.



Monday,

Monday, ———.

I DATE again to say, I was this morning excessively fluttered, and yet I was very foolish to be so, you will say.

As the maid was bringing in my breakfast, I thought I heard the hasty tread of some gentleman running up stairs, and go into the very next apartment to mine, which is an extreme handsome one. Alarmed as my feeble heart is with every sound, I could not help enquiring of the maid servant what occasioned the noise I heard.

“ It

“ It is only, Madam, our new lodger just come—and they are bringing up his trunks and luggage.”

“ A new lodger?”

“ O, yes—a sweet pretty man as one should see in a summer’s day. I saw him talking with my mistress this morning; and to be sure, he looked so handsome, and is so tall, and his servants have the prettiest liveries.”

The dreadful idea of the vile Sir Harry being ever in my mind, a tremor seized me, which however this prating Abigail did not observe, and I had just courage enough to ask, though in a low faint

144 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
faint voice, "What is this gentleman's
name?—Not that I want to know (said
I, carelessly) I am sure it can be no-
thing to me, who, or what he is."

"I verily think, Ma'am, he is some
vast great gentleman.—I believe some
Baron — or *Baron-et*," (O, Harriet!
how did my heart flutter at the very
sound of the word *Baronet*!) "for I
am confident—sure,—ma'am, my mis-
tress called him Sir something."

"Well, said I; you need not stay;"
fearing I should betray my confusion
to this *pertest* of all *pert* chamber-
maids.

Heaven

Heaven forbid that this man should be really the vile wretch Sir Harry Beaumont!—that would be dreadful indeed, beyond what can be imagined of terror, to have him in the very next room to me!—God forbid!—But after all, are there not more baronets in the world than one?—But the girl said he was tall and handsome. Well, though his person is remarkably so, yet there may, and certainly are, many young men of fortune and fashion, who may excel him in those particulars. I wish I had never come into so large a lodging house, and now heartily repent I ever left my little quiet apartment at good Mrs. Mills's, where I was in so absolute a retirement. And now, perhaps, this

pert, foolish girl, may prate to the servants, that I was enquiring about their master. I have an hundred doubts; and am, indeed, nothing but tumult, fears, and weakness. But O blasphemous distrust!—what again do you dictate to my pen?—and have I not *thee*, all powerful guardian of distressed innocence, to support me! Begone then ye vain fears, my heavenly helper is at hand, and is nearer to me than any evil which is capable of annoying me. I will therefore, wrapped in conscious innocence, commit myself to his good providence, and pursue my daily employment.



Thursday

Thursday Morning.

MY apprehensions as to the new lodger are not yet abated ; and unfortunately the maid, who might have before now have made me acquainted with the *dreaded* name, has been sent for home, ever since I saw her, to attend a dying mother ; and in her stead, the few necessaries of life I have had occasion for, have been brought to me by a poor little girl, her sister, a mere child, who knows nothing.

So here I am still under this painful suspense !—The mistress of the house

H 2

I sel-

I seldom see:—nay, if I did, I would not ask her questions, for fear of raising suspicions. Whoever he is, he seems much disturbed in *mind*, for he is so continually walking to and fro in his chamber, till even midnight, that I cannot get a wink of sleep. I wish I could get a peep at one of his servants, as even the livery would convince.

Bless me! what do I hear?—A violin in his apartment!—What masterly execution!—Ah, Harriet, I am almost fainting:—it is---it must be him!---the vile Sir Harry was particularly skilful on that instrument. But, once more, be hushed my fears; may not another, or a thousand other men besides him,
play

play on the fiddle? and this performer I think plays with a more delicate taste than that wretch did. If the prating girl had not called this man a *Baronet*, I should have been perfectly easy, nay, could have even been entertained with the amazing fine tones, which this unknown performer draws from his violin, but the very *name* of a *Baronet* is my terror.

* * * * *

This charming violin would divert many a tedious moment, as I sit at my needle, earning my humble fare, was I convinced the performer was not the shocking Sir Harry. What an amaz-

150 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
ing fine adagio have I just been listening to!---Such tones!---But enough at present of this man, whoever he be.

I shall begin most impatiently to long to hear how you do, and what are your amusements in your present gay scene of dissipation. I shall write again as soon as I possibly can; and hope, by that time, my present doubts and fears will all be cleared up about my fellow lodger. I will still hope the man is an absolute stranger to,

My dearest Harriet,

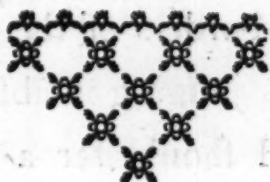
Your ever faithful,

LUCY.

P. S. I know you will pity me heartily, for the additional flutter I have had

HISTORY OF Miss SIDNEY. 151

had for this last week. O, my dear, how dreadful the idea that, perhaps at this moment, Sir Harry Beaumont may be in the very next apartment!--Horrid thought!--but I will not indulge the frightful apprehension. Once more adieu, my sweet friend.



H 4

Mr.

Mr. HARLEY to CHARLES STANLEY, Esq.

Kensington.

YOU will, my friend, be doubtless surprized to find by this, I have not yet left England according to my fixed purpose so to do; but a low, lingering fever, has reduced me almost to the borders of the grave, and my physicians judging it absolutely necessary that I should for a few weeks try some new medicines, I am removed to an airy situation at Kensington. Though for this last fortnight I have been daily gaining strength, yet I was easily

easily prevailed on to leave London, which you know I never could endure. I have been at my lodgings at Kensington about a week, and have found much benefit already from the change of air. I no longer, indeed, look upon myself in the light of a sick man; my bodily health being now pretty well established. Ah, Charles! ---- that I could tell thee my mind had regained its former tranquil state!---but I still sigh,---still endure the miseries of an hopeless, lasting passion. "If music be the food of love," I have leisure at present to indulge myself in that delightful entertainment; my chief companion being the fine Cremona fiddle you presented me with on your return

from Italy. My situation is likewise convenient here on another account, than merely being near my physicians, as it is absolutely necessary that I should be near my lawyers, and my uncle's trustees in town, with whom I have not yet half settled my business relative to his fortune, which on his death all devolved to me, as does the estate of a distant relation of mine, Sir Philip Beaumont, whose name, by his will, I was to take, as well as title, with a clear two thousand pounds a year.—My mother's name was Beaumont—but this, my friend, you knew—and likewise I suppose you heard of the alteration of my name by Mr. Bond, my counsellor:—though it is scarce a month since

since I have changed it, and taken up my new title of *Baronet*; which was for a great number of years in my mother's family.—But, ah! my Stanley, what is fortune, what is *title*, to the wretched, where the heart can have no share in the joy?—The noble castle of Beaumont, without the lovely woman who engrosses all my thoughts, and whose image haunts me day and night, will be no better than a dreary solitude. How greatly preferable would be the meanest straw-built cottage with her for whom my soul is in continual anguish! —Ah! what will now avail, the lofty terrace, the spacious park, and gay parterre, with every other delightful acquisition of which I am now possessed,

whilst the unhappy owner of them is, and must be miserable?—One comfort, however, still remains, which is, that I shall appropriate the profits of my large fortune to the service of the needy; to wipe away the tear from the eye of the fatherless, and to cause the widow's heart to sing for joy, shall be the chief business of my life. The feeble aged too, and smiling infant, shall enjoy my bounty. I shall not seek to amuse my sorrows by any fashionable indulgence, by any reigning levity of the times:—my steadfast, my strenuous pursuit (as you well know) is *virtue* in her every form, and to her exalted principles I shall ever most firmly adhere.

I grieve

I grieve much that you are still confined at Bath on account of your health:—I wish heartily you could come to spend one week at least with me in this retirement. The house is large and pleasant:—no other family in it:—indeed no other person, but a single young woman, a Miss Seymour; but who, or what she is, I know not, neither have I one grain of curiosity to ask. Ah, my Charles, all curiosity with me is dead, since I must remain in eternal absence from the only woman I ever did, or ever can love;—poor unfortunate!—where may she, alas! be now wandering?—and to what evils and dangers be exposed from the beauty of her enchanting form?—perhaps, at this
fatal

fatal moment, the prey of some vile libertine:—but I fly from the horrid thought.—Ye powers of mercy!—ye guardian angels who preside over the helpless, take her to your care.—*If* she be innocent—(but I blame myself sometimes for ever suspecting her) she will, she must be under the peculiar Providence of protecting heaven. My suspicions, I fear, have been too rash:—we are all so mighty wise, and so apt to pass our judgments, when, after all, she might be perhaps *virtuous*, though obliged to conceal herself:—she might be innocent, and yet distressed.—Guilt, surely, could never dwell in that angelic form. How often, as I have stood lost in admiration, and gazing on her
lovely

lovely face, expressive of the utmost sweetness and sensibility, have I remarked

——“ A thousand blushing apparitions
 “ To start into her face ; a thousand innocent
 “ shames,
 “ In angel-whiteness, bear away her blushes !”

Wherever this charming woman may now be, I have, however, amidst all my melancholy reflection, the satisfaction of hoping she has not yet felt the miseries of absolute want ; as (soon after I sent the Bank note I mentioned in my last) I caused to be directed to her, and sent by the next carrier, every kind of necessary which could possibly be sent by such a conveyance. I likewise

wife sent a few books for her amusement, as they are, at all times, sweet and instructive companions:—and perhaps there may be *bints* (as those I sent were all of the best, and most refined taste) to lead her gently into the path of virtue, *if* she has unhappily swerved from its dictates. And that she might not want for another elegant amusement, in her melancholy confinement (whatever be the cause of it) I purchased her a guitar of the finest tone, and by the best maker.—The melancholy sweetness of this little instrument may greatly contribute to soothe her sorrows, and hush her mind to peace. I early discovered, in my second visit to this lovely woman, that she had a taste
for

for music:—I observed she was writing when I approached her; and I saw likewise, it was a fine air of Pergoleze, which she had been transcribing from her memory, though she endeavoured to conceal it from me, in some confusion (which I remember at the time greatly excited my surprize) and blushing, hastily began to remove it; yet I saw enough of her writing to convince me, she must have great skill in the instrument, to write from memory what she had been just doing. By relieving her distresses, and contributing to her innocent amusements, I enjoy, my Stanley, a refined delight; whilst, by concealing my bounty, I do not lay her under those delicate, painful feelings, which

which a generous mind too often suffers from a sense of unreturnable obligations.

Besides, I had another reason for keeping my small gifts concealed from this lovely woman:—the world, my friend, the world, which ever did, and ever will judge uncharitably, might have made some conclusions not much to the credit of the lady's character, nor to my own. I have seldom known a generous action fail of being attributed to some view of private interest. So depraved is the world in general, that when even a common bounty exceeds the usual forms, it is generally misconstrued into some vice, or selfish end,

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 16

end, by people who have no idea but what relates to *self*. I grant, a mind truly great, and strong in *virtue*, will disregard these invidious surmises, and will receive a heart-felt delight from its own reflections, and the sweet pleasure of knowing that the tear of affliction is wiped away from the pale, languid cheek of modest worth; a satisfaction far superior to the low approbation of mankind:—but feeble, weak virtue, is too often discouraged by these unjust censures, and will sooner neglect the seasonable relief of assisting a fellow creature, than incur the least shadow of suspicion.

"Tis

64 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

'Tis now deep midnight.—“ The moon just

“ Peeping through the chambers of the fleecy
“ east.”—

“ Now all the world, and all the sons of care
“ lie hush'd in sleep.”

“ Now crickets sing, and man's o'er-labour'd
“ Sense, repairs itself by rest.”

This is the solemn, fittest hour for
meditation.

“ Where now, ye lying vanities of life !

“ Ye ever tempting, ever cheating train !

“ Where are ye now ? and what is your amount ?

“ Vexation, disappointment, and remorse.

“ Sad sickening thought ! and yet, deluded
“ man,

“ A scene of crude disjointed visions past,

“ And broken slumbers, rises still resolv'd,

“ With new-flush'd hopes, to run the giddy
“ round.”

I have

I have been walking, for this last hour, indulging contemplation in my apartment,

" Beneath the trembling languish

" Of the moon's pale beams.——

" But in vain I wander through the shade for
" peace.——

" 'Tis with the calm alone, the pure of
" heart,

" That there the goddess talks—but in my
" breast,

" ——This secret eating pang, still restless
" throbs,

" Earnest, intent, devoted all to her."

" And *she* alone,

" Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,

" Fills every sense, and pants in every vein."

Hea:

Heavens ! what a night ! I have been standing some minutes at my window, which looks to the garden.

“ How sweet the moon-light sleeps upon that
“ bank,

“ And will not be awak'd !——

“ Whilst all the floor of heaven

“ Is thick inlay'd with patterns of bright gold.

“ There's not the smallest orb which we be-
“ hold,

“ But in his motion like an angel sings,

“ Still choiring to the young-ey'd cherubims.”

But hark !—methinks I hear the distant sound of plaintive music:—the soft touches of sweet harmony.—Again !—from whence can it possibly proceed ?—Is it enchantment ?—what ravishing sounds !

sounds!—Low, and sadly sweet.—Let me listen:—it is a guitar;—touched with exquisite taste;—what expression in those soft chords!—they seem in perfect unison with my sad heart!—But hush—is it not in the very next apartment?—It is.—This is indeed an enchanting. Methinks I hear a woman's voice, soft and low, but inexpressibly melodious, accompanying the instrument. Oh, Charles! my beating heart—but it cannot be her—it is a Miss Seymour who lodges in the next room:—at least I was told so, but the people might mistake the name.—Hark!—I hear her door opened, and with soft but quick steps, as if she trod on down, the unknown performer is descending
the

168 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
the stair case.—She is gone (I see from
my window, by the light of the moon,
which shines at this moment so clearly
bright, that I can even discern every
flower on the banks of the parterre)
into a little wilderness at the bottom
of the garden. The night being into-
lerably sultry, she is gone to enjoy the
coolness of that sweet spot,

“Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a
“couch.”

I see her, but her back is towards
me with a guitar under her arm, walk-
ing hastily down the garden.—Tall, and
finely formed!—Such was the lovely
woman who—Oh, my Stanley, if it
should

should be her! — My heart beats strangely.

I will not open my window for fear of alarming her; but I will steal gently down, and stand concealed behind the spreading oak under which she is sitting. I shall there at one view be convinced if it be (as my throbbing heart tells me it is) the enchanting mistress of my soul.—For worlds I would not alarm her:—but my curiosity, you must imagine, in *such* a circumstance, cannot be resisted. I go:—and when I return (for I am convinced I shall not close my eyes this night) will tell you the result of my adventure, which you will agree with me would not disgrace

170 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
the pages of any *modern* novel what-
ever.

O, Charles! my astonishment!—my
rapture!—it is—it is she!—mysterious
heaven!—thou wonder-working power!
—I am all wild amazement.—But I
will hasten to give you the surprizing
particulars, as fast as my beating
heart, and trembling hand, will give
me leave.

I hastened down, as I told you I
should, into the garden, and with cau-
tious steps stole round a little dark walk,
which brought me at once, unperceiv-
ed, into the little wilderness:—but,
good God! what was my amazement
when

when I saw clearly (the moon shining in its brightest splendor) that it was the lovely woman for whom my soul has suffered such constant anguish!—I forgot, alas! she was married:—I forgot every resolution I had made of quitting England:—and, with the utmost difficulty, I was restrained from throwing myself at her feet. She was seated on a small bench, under a large oak, intermixed with jasmines and sweet briar. She appeared charming as the queen of love.—My philosophy began to stagger:—however, I was determined not to discover myself, nor to alarm her at that hour, and in that situation, for ten thousand worlds. So fearful was I of disturbing or interrupting

172 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
the tender reverie, in which she
seemed to be deeply engaged, that
I even hardly drew my breath. She
sighed, as if her heart would burst,—
her lovely cheek reclined on her hand.
—When, after sitting some moments
lost as it were in profound thought,
she raised her charming eyes to heaven,
and wiping away a few tears, she gazed
with admiration on that glorious lumi-
nary, the silver moon, “ then walking
in all its brightness,” whilst,

“ The full ethereal round,
“ Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
“ Shone out intensely keen ; and all one cope
“ Of starry glitter, glow'd from pole to pole.”

Still

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 173

Still gazing on the spangled firmament, she softly exclaimed, addressing herself with an air of humble adoration, to the glorious author of those wonders.

" O Providence, thou ever-waking eye,

" Look down with pity on the feeble toil

" Of mortals lost to hope, and lead me safe,

" Thro' all my dreary labyrinth of fate."

Think, my friend, of my exquisite delight to see her in this soul-piercing attitude! and unconscious she was the object of any *human* eye, I had the full opportunity of observing her *every* inimitable grace.—Heavens! how beautiful did she appear! Her dress how elegantly negligent!

174 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

“ Warm in her cheek, the sultry season

“ glow'd.”

The sweet sequestered spot seemed sacred to the delights of happy lovers:—all nature seemed hushed, as if to aid the soft confession—but honour—stern, rigid honour (which with me you know is *sacred*) forbade a thought,---or even a latent wish, of availing myself of this un-looked for, happy opportunity*. But to be brief, though I could dwell for ever on this enchanting period.---

* We may here see the force and power of habitual virtue in a good mind, which is proof against all temptations and opportunities.←
What a striking contrast betwixt this character, and the vile, sensual wretch at Ash-Park !

When

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 175

When this loveliest of women had once more sighed, as if her heart was oppressed by some secret grief, she took her guitar, and after touching a few soft, ravishing chords, with the most exquisite taste, and “with *preludiam sweet*,” after gently hemming, as if fearful of being heard, she began singing in a low, but inexpressible elegant manner, and with the sweet voice of a * Linley, joined with the execution, and fine taste of a Sestini, the following charming song, which is in the masque of Alfred; but, from the masterly manner of her performance, I

* The name of a remarkable fine English singer.

176 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
am persuaded the notes she had herself
composed,

S O N G.

I.

Sweet valley, say where pensive lying,
For me, alas! my Henry, sighing,
That best of mortals leans his head.
Ye fountains dimpled by my sorrow,
Ye brooks that my complainings borrow,
O say, yet is my shepherd dead?
Or if my lover,
Deep woods you cover,
Ah, whisper where your shadows o'er him spread.

II.

'Tis not the loss of pomp and pleasure,
Of empire, or of tinsel treasure,

That

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 177

That drops this tear, that swells this groan;
No: from a nobler cause proceeding,
A heart with love and fondness bleeding,
I breathe my sadly-pleasing moan.
With other anguish,
I scorn to languish,
For love will feel no sorrows but its own.

Oh, Charles!----with what rapture
did I listen!--I was all ear; and took
in strains in Milton's emphatic phrase,

" Which might create
" A soul under the ribs of death."——
" Scylla wept, and chid her barking waves,
" And fierce Charybdis murmur'd soft applause,
" But such delight, such sober certainty of
" waking bliss,
" I never heard till then."

I 5

But,

But, alas! my friend, I could not proceed with the expressive language of the above inimitable author, viz.

“ I’ll speak to her,——and she shall be my
“ queen :”

Since rigid honour, as she is, by the sacred marriage vow, unalterably engaged to another man, must for ever forbid a declaration of my unhappy passion. But, ah! Stanley! who is this Henry, whose name she so tenderly invoked in her charming song?—perhaps her husband;—or perhaps some favoured lover,—for whom she sighed so bitterly.—Happy—happy man, whoever he be!

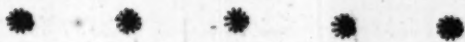
But

But to continue my adventure.—After she had sat a few moments, as if lost in thought, she rose.—Heavens! what a majestic form! and how elegantly shaped!—Then taking her guitar under her arm, she hastily quitted the enchanting spot (after looking round her, with timid apprehension, lest she had been observed) and tripped, or rather flew, with all her speed up the little grass walk into the house. I stood for some minutes to give her full time to get into her apartment; and in a state of such astonishment, that I was inclined to believe all I had seen and heard, was no other than the effect of enchantment, and could not help asking myself, “if this existence of mine was

180 THE WEDDING RING; OR,
real, or a dream?"—After once more
looking at the dear shade, under which
the lovely phantom had been sitting, I
retired to my apartment as speedily as
possible, and have been scribbling ever
since to you an account of this night's
enchantment.—Hark!—no—all is silent
in her apartment, and I suppose she is
gone to rest.—“May her slumbers be
balmy as infants sleep.”—O heavens!
is it—can it be possible, my Stanley,
that she is this moment in the very next
apartment to mine?—the very next?—
only a thin partition to divide us?—I
cannot close my eyes this night.—Sey-
mour,—a Miss Seymour!—What has
she again changed her name?—and
now passes for an *unmarried* woman?—

very

very dark and mysterious this! It is now as probable to believe she may *not* be married, as that she *is*.—Not, my friend, that a woman of a *suspected* character ever shall be united with your friend; and you must agree with me, here is great room for suspicion.—I can look upon her as I would on a fine picture, but no more:—I will, however, as if by accident, ask the mistress of the house a question or two about her.—Curiosity—meer curiosity prompts me to do this. I am going to walk in my anti-chamber, till morning, to meditate on this strange adventure.—Ah, Charles!—but, adieu! for a few hours.



Ten in the Morning.

I WRITE again to say I have, as I could wish, just had an opportunity of asking Mrs. Smith, the good woman of the house, a few questions, as if by meer chance, on the subject *nearest my heart*;—she has just been with me, to ask me what I would have for dinner.—Dinner!—what is dinner to a man in love?

“ I hope, Sir, you like your lodgings,” the civil woman began.

“ Yes,

“ Yes, Madam, and they are very quiet ;—but I think you have no other family in the house ?”

“ No, Sir,—only a poor, single young gentlewoman, who, I am sure, cannot disturb you.”—(are you sure of that, thought I) “ She has been ill, Sir, I fancy, from her looks, and hardly ever stirs out of her chamber.---She is, I believe, rather low in the world :---rather in distress I fancy, from what my maid says—and so often in tears, that I seldom go into her room, as my own spirits, ever since the death of my poor, dear, first husband, are so extremely low, that——”

“ And

"And what is this lady's name?" said I, affecting to yawn carelessly---and fearful the good woman was going to give me the whole history of her poor, dear first husband.

"Seymour, Sir,---a Miss Seymour. ---She is to be sure a very pretty woman:---nay, quite a beauty, if she had a little more colour:---but she sits so much at her needle;---for she works for the milliners,----Poor young creature---I am sorry for her:---but, as I said, I seldom go into her room;---she is so very melancholy---that---she would infect my poor spirits, and weak nerves ---for I am very *nervous*.---She is mighty welcome to a dish of tea below with me,

me, in my parlour, at any time.---But you have not, Sir, told me what you would order for dinner."

I saw at once, that Mrs. Smith, like many other people who let lodgings, is much *too fine* a lady for her business, or to visit a poor distressed young woman. Dismissing her, as soon as I could, I again fell to ruminating on the affecting description of this unhappy young creature.---Work for the shops! ---and so often in tears!---She is---she must be blameless.---Her very employment,---her virtuous industry convinces me, she is innocently distressed.---I must ---I will relieve her---and---that as speedily, and in as delicate a manner

as

186 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

as I am able.---I will see her;---I will by some means contrive an interview, the result of which I will tell you in my next.---Adieu.

This instant I have yours, in which you tell me nothing but the German Spa will restore your health. I grieve I cannot see you before your departure. Do not fail writing before you set out. May every blessing attend you. Yours, very sincerely. I subscribe my *old* name of

HARLEY.

Miss

HISTORY OF Miss SIDNEY. 187

Miss SIDNEY, to Miss WOODLEY.

Richmond.

O MY beloved friend, once more am I escaped from that vilest of wretches, Sir Harry Beaumont!---and escaped, I thank heaven, with unsullied innocence.---- Yes, my Harriet, that most wicked of men had taken up his abode in the very same house that I did:---in the very next apartment. I shudder at the dreadful dangers to which I have been exposed, in being under the same roof with such a monster of iniquity.---You see my fears were prophetic:

phetic:---you see I had reason to be alarmed. Ye sacred powers, ye guardian angels who protect and watch over helpless innocence, you have indeed been careful of your charge!---Alas! my dear, I must have been ruined----inevitably so, but for the *ever-waking eye of wonder-working Providence*. By the meekest chance I luckily made the happy discovery, that it was the wretch for whom I have been in continual alarms. There is no doubt to be made but that he took this lodging, in order to put his vile designs in immediate execution:---he has been plotting since his arrival for some horrid stratagem:---to secure me without a possibility of escape, was his wicked aim I doubt not.

Those

Those midnight walks in his apartment were the hours in which he was meditating his dreadful schemes; and how, perhaps, he should conceal himself in my room. — Frightful apprehension! — Or, perhaps (which is most probable) how he should at once carry me off to some of his horrid receptacles of vice and infamy.

I was particularly lucky in my discovery of this vile man; which was by one of those, to *us* blind mortals, meer chances, which, however trifling they appear, are productive of our utmost misery, or happiness in this world; and are, I am persuaded, the secret workings of that almighty

“ Inspiring

“ Inspiring God, who,
 “ Boundless spirit all, and unremitting energy,
 “ Pervades, adjusts, and agitates the whole.”

Think, my Harriet, of my astonishment, when the maid who brought in my daily food, on my asking her (assuming as careless an air as possible) if she yet knew the name of the gentleman in the next apartment; “O, yes, Madam,—I think in my poor opinion it is a very pretty name—that is—it is an odd ——”

“ Well, (said I, longing, yet dreading to hear the fatal sound) what is it then?”

“ Why,

“ Why, Madam, he is called Sir Harry Beau—Beau———”

“ Beaumont,” said I, faintly, but hardly articulately.

“ The same, replied the girl—yes; that’s his name, and a sweet pretty man he is as ever the fun shone on.—Sir Harry Beaumont is the gentleman.”

I faintly screamed, and with the utmost difficulty, preserved myself from fainting; but, luckily, this prating girl perceived not my agitation, being so full of his praises that she could attend to nothing else.

“ He

“ He has a monstrous fortune, Madam, and not one bit of pride in him. —Of all the liveries I ever saw in my life, and I have seen a pretty many, never did I see —— ”

“ Well, well, said I, you need not stay—I am now a little busy.”

The maid was no sooner departed, than I fell on my knees, imploring the succour of that Almighty Power, who never fails the sincere invoker: when, firmly determined to quit at once a house in which I could have no doubt but my eternal ruin would be very soon compleated, I hastily packed up the most valuable of my small stock of
necessaries,

necessaries, and putting my watch, and the remainder of your kind bounty in my pocket, with the utmost intrepidity I opened my door, and sallied down stairs.—Every thing befriended my departure: the weather was remarkably fine, and I had heard, an hour before, the *dreaded* wretch was gone out in his chariot to spend the day. This opportunity of his short absence was not to be lost. I soon settled my small matters with Mrs. Smith, who was too civil, or too *fine* a lady, to enquire into the cause of my sudden departure:—it was quite sufficient to say, I was going to settle myself in town. The Kensington stage, that instant, passing by, I got into it

with my bundles, secretly blessing heaven that I was entirely got clear of the *fatal* house, as it would have undoubtedly proved. I soon found myself in the great town, which is certainly the best hiding-place in the world. Here, as my joy in escaping from the vilest of men increased, my spirits returned.—I got into a hackney coach, and drove directly to the milliners in Bond-Street, who had employed me. I staid with her some days, during which time, her sister, a good kind of woman, who keeps a lodging house at Richmond, came to town; and I, finding London, as it ever did, disagree with my health, was easily persuaded by Mrs. Turner, (the

HISTORY OF MISS SIDNEY. 195

(the sister's name) to go with her down to Richmond; assuring me she would find me constant employment for my needle, from the numerous families which flock to that delightful spot in the summer season; and that she had a small neat apartment which would perfectly suit me. There was so much civility and kindness in the behaviour of Mrs. Turner, that I accepted with pleasure her proposal, and indeed was heartily glad to be, in a manner, under the safeguard and protection of so good a woman. Here then, my dear, at Richmond I am entirely settled for the *present*, to my satisfaction: — indeed as much so as my destitute condition can

196 THE WEDDING RING; OR,

possibly admit.—I command from my window the most beautiful prospect, I suppose, which England affords. I have this moment just in view the *whitened* spire of Richmond church, which has a fine effect.—Recollecting, that the grave of my favourite poet Thomson is in that spot; these sweet lines of Mr. Collins's celebrated ode on that subject, every moment occur to my remembrance.

I.

“ IN yonder grove a druid lies,
Where slowly winds the stealing wave!
The years best sweets shall duteous rise,
To deck its poet's sylvan grave.

In

II.

In yon deep bed of whisp'ring reeds,
His airy harp * shall now be laid;
That he, whose heart in sorrow bleeds,
May love thro' life, the soothing shade.

III.

Then maids and youths shall linger here,
And while its sounds at distance swell,
Shall sadly seem in pity's ear,
To hear the Woodland pilgrims knell.

IV.

Remembrance oft, shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer-wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar,
To bid his gentle spirit rest.

* The harp of Æolus, of which there is a description in the admirable poem of Mr. Thomson, called the Castle of Indolence.

V.

And oft as health and ease retire,
To breezy lawn or forest deep,
The friend shall view the * whit'ning spire,
And 'mid the varied landscape weep.

VI.

But thou, who own'st that earthly bed ;
Ah ! what will every dirge avail ?
Or tears which love, and pity shed,
That mourn beneath the gliding sail !

VII.

Yet lives there one, whose heedless eye
Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimm'ring near ?
With him, sweet bard, may fancy die,
And joy desert the blooming year.

* Richmond Church.

But

VIII.

But thou lorn stream, whose fullen tide,
No sedge-crown'd sisters now attend,
Now waft me to the green hill's side,
Whose cold turf hides the buried friend.

IX.

And see the fairy valley's fade,
Dun night has veil'd the solemn view;
Yet once again, dear, parted shade,
Meek nature's child, again adieu!

X.

The genial meads, assign'd to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom,
Their hinds, and shepherd-girls shall dress,
With simple hands, thy rural tomb.

XI.

Long, long thy stone, and pointed clay,
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes;
O! vales, and wild woods, shall he say,
In yonder grave, your druid lies."

I can but think, my Harriet, how the wicked wretch at Kensington will be surprized, when he once more finds the intended victim of his infamous designs has escaped his vile stratagems.—But not another word about him.

And now, my sweet friend, that I have given you an account of my present safety and situation, I think it is high time I should thank you for your kind * letter, written on your road from Paris to the Spa, which I luckily received a few days before I left Kensington.—Can you forgive me, for not having (before I have been scribbling, for

* This letter appears not; being not necessary to the thread of the history.

this last hour, of my own affairs) said one single word of the gratitude which really oppresses my full heart, for the sincere kindness, and noble warmth of friendship, you express for your poor Lucy?—Yes—you will forgive me I know, and be convinced, that the anxious solicitude I know you feel for my unprotected, my helpless state, was the cause of my seeming neglect.

And so, my dear, you really deny you know any thing of the bank note, and the other noble presents you sent?—I thought, indeed, you would assure me you knew nothing of the matter:—it is so like you.—I expected no less than your denying, with the gravest face,

the whole noble act, for fear of giving me pain:—for fear of oppressing your poor, indigent friend, with the powerful weight of *unreturnable* obligation. Ah! my sweet Harriet, what an exalted mind is yours, who, with the most benevolent heart which ever existed in the human breast, doubly enhance your favours, by your *delicate* manner of bestowing them.

You wish me to be very minute:—I promise you to be so. Indeed, writing to you, my best friend, is the only alleviation, the only softening comfort which can assuage my sorrows, and suspend, for the present moment, the deep-felt anguish, ever swelling in my breast.

—Ah!

—Ah! my dear, where now, alas! may poor Mr. ———, but I fly from the fatal subject:—to you I can unburthen every care—in your faithful bosom, the seat of spotless truth and tender confidence, I can repose every grief, sure of your pity, and convinced of your unalterable faith. It is one of the sweetest privileges of friendship, this, of communicating every thought, as it arises, to my Harriet, without fear or distrust; or, as Pope, in his expressive manner, calls it, “*Thinking aloud.*”

No one lodges in this house besides myself, but a gentleman, who has, it seems, an apartment here, for a few days, and is very little in the house, being

attending on a dying relation in the town of Richmond—a rich old lady, called Mrs. Morley; and this young gentleman, I find, is her nephew: he has been here but two days, and stays no longer than as fate determines the poor lady's departure from this life.

Mrs. Turner is a most civil, kind woman; she has just brought me a supply for my needle; a dozen of very fine shirts, and as many cambrick pocket handkerchiefs;—so you see I am not idle;—I rise early, and the above needle-work is my daily employment, except when I am shedding a few tears, or writing to my sweet friend.



Monday

Monday Evening.

PERHAPS you know not (or at least you will be surprized when I tell you) that your poor Lucy is become a thief,—a downright thief.—You start ; —nay it is true :—but ah, Harriet, such a temptation I could not resist :—my self-denial was not proportioned to the trial.—Distress, I see, will make us dishonest ;—it was impossible to withstand the theft. —“ What theft (you cry)—surely, Lucy, your poverty has not”—Have a moment’s patience, my dear, and you shall hear, and judge of my crime.—No—no—my poverty was
now

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now out of the question:----gold (as much as I may want it) was not the attraction which seduced me to commit this theft. — “Provoking Lucy, what can you mean?” — Well, come, my Harriet, to relieve your curiosity, I must tell you I have just been *filching* a small miniature picture:—it was set round, it is true, with diamonds, but those glittering gems I despised;---it was the dear resemblance only which attracted my admiration:—in short, I have had this evening---an amazing adventure I must call it, and of which I must give you the particulars.

No person being this afternoon in the house but Mrs. Turner, and myself,
(the

(the gentleman I mentioned being gone to his aunt to spend the day) she (Mrs. Turner) begged I would drink tea with her, after which, by way of amusing me, she told me she would shew me the house, the prospects from every window being remarkably beautiful. After viewing the several rooms, she told me one apartment, in which we then were, was the gentleman's.---I stood for some moments looking at the delightful views it commanded, whilst the worthy woman was busied in fixing a window curtain in the closet adjoining. The apartment was spacious, and elegantly furnished.---On casting my eyes around it, I observed some dressing-boxes on the table, which I thought uncommonly hand-

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handsome:— I went to inspect them
nearer, when on opening one, I observed
a small shagreen case----“ Too curious,
Lucy, (you cry) what business pray had
you to be looking and peeping among
those dressing-boxes?----Well, my dear,
condemn me as you please, but it was
not in nature to resist the curiosity
which that moment seized me, to open
this little picture-case.----I did as curi-
osity prompted---but, good heaven's!
what was my amazement!---I was even
petrified with astonishment, when I
beheld the perfect resemblance of Mr.
Harley.----Gracious God! I exclaimed,
can it be?---is it possible?---Yes, my
dear, it was indeed the most exact like-
ness:---those expressive eyes, beaming
with

with sense and manly sweetness :--the same dignity in the whole countenance :--the same sweet smile of benign complacency :--in short, every feature expressed in the most masterly manner,--I gazed on the dear resemblance, for a few moments with inexpressible delight, and breathing a sigh, softly exclaimed, --What would I not give to have this little picture for a few days only in my possession !--I will copy it, I will get a few materials, which my skill in painting will direct me how to manage, and when I have copied the original, will most undoubtedly restore it to the box where I found it.---After pressing the little senseless form to my lips, with trembling hands I took it from its case,

and

and hastily put it in my bosom :---No, no, my friend, I could not so soon part with the image of the most beloved, and amiable of men : I will, at least, keep it in my possession for a few days, to contemplate---to talk to---and, ah ! my Harriet, perhaps to weep over !---What a refined delight shall I enjoy, after a whole day spent in virtuous industry, and in earning my humble fare, to recompence my toil by gazing, for a few moments, on his expressive eyes, ---on features, which almost glow with animated life, and fire !---How often, since I have had this little precious treasure in my possession, have these inimitably beautiful lines of Shakespeare, in his Merchant of Venice, occurred to my

my remembrance! and as they are on the same occasion, are, I hope, not unapplicable, the name only changed.

“ What find I here?

“ My Henry’s counterfeit? What demy god

“ Hath come so near creation? Move these

“ eyes?

“ Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,

“ Seem they in motion? Here are fever’d lips

“ Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar

“ Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in

“ his hair

“ The painter plays the spider; and hath

“ woven

“ A mesh to entrap the hearts of women.—

———“ But his eyes,—

“ How could he see to do them? having

“ made one,

“ Methinks

"Methinks it should have power to steal both

"his,

"And leave itself unfinish'd."

But you will ask, did you secure your prize before Mrs. Turner returned to you?—I did; and like a hardened *thief* as I was, (on her saying she hoped I had been agreeably employed during her stay in the closet) I told her I had been highly entertained with gazing on the most enchanting prospect in the world.

It is now deep midnight:—the solemn hour of one o'clock in the morning, has just warned me by its distant, melancholy sound, from Richmond steeple,

steeple, to close this long epistle, and
to repair by sleep,

“ Balm of hurt minds—fore labour’s bath,

“ Chief nourisher in life’s feast,”

for the daily employment of to-mor-
row.—Adieu, then, my best, my ex-
cellent friend ; and believe me ever,

With the truest affection, your

LUCY SIDNEY.

P. S. You tell me, your uncle has
made you acquainted with an affair of
great consequence ;—for heaven’s sake,
my Harriet, how could you raise my cu-
riosity

riosity to so high a pitch without satisfying it?—Indulge me in this satisfaction, I intreat you, as soon as possible.

I had forgot to tell you, that the linen I am employed in making, is all to be marked with the odious initials of H. B.—hateful letters!—I shall never endure them again.—Not upon this account, that I am the least alarmed, in believing I am working for Sir Harry Beaumont—(vile wretch as he is!) for Mrs. Turner has told me, a lady in the neighbourhood sent her, sometime since, this parcel of work for the employment of some distressed person—and I am convinced the above wicked man has not any connexions with any lady of credit
and

and fashion. But not another word after I have told you, I am now in reality preparing for my solitary bed, though first, I must take one more peep at the dear picture. — Ah, Harriet! where is now the original?—wandering in some distant clime;—what seas divide us!—this pleasing likeness of his, I suppose, he might, on his departure from England, leave with some beloved friend.



Mr.

Mr. HARLEY to CHARLES STANLEY, Esq.

Richmond.

IT is hardly, my dear friend, in the power of language to inform you, the miserable, the unaccountable disappointment I have met with since I wrote to you last, in which letter I told you I was determined, at all events, to get an interview, at least to make a very *particular* enquiry concerning the lovely woman who has so warmly engaged (and, alas! I fear, will ever continue to do) my tenderest affection.— But how shall I tell you my surprize, my

my astonishment, when I was informed, on my returning home, after having spent the next day abroad, following the enchanting evening in which I both *saw* and *heard*, the charming vision in the garden, that Miss Seymour had very abruptly left the house, without giving any previous notice—that she seemed in great agitation of mind—and that she hurried away with the utmost precipitation?—These strange and vexatious tidings I heard from Mrs. Smith on my return; — who, on my asking if any persons had enquired for me, began,—“ O, dear Sir—I protest I have been this whole blessed day in such a flutter, and flurry of spirits, that I hardly know who has, or has not

been here; however, I have one person less in my family than I had;—but no matter for that:—a pretty looking young creature, to be sure;—but I fear,—I greatly fear no better, as the saying is, than she should be. — And yet how people may be mistaken!—I did say, indeed, I never would take a stranger again; but her precipitate departure has amazed me. Her escape out of the house I may call it; for she has left half her things I find.—She had when she set out, such a wildness in her eyes, that my poor weak nerves have suffered ever since, from the perturbation she flung me into. She laid me down my money, indeed, and looking wildly behind her at every step, as if

if she was fearful of being pursued, flew out of the house like lightning.— A fine Madam, indeed! not to speak to one.—I am sure, ever since I have let lodgings, which I only do merely because it is an *amusement* to have people about one, and there is I think something chearful in a large family; I have had the best of people; the most *genteelest* of ladies, not only lodge in my house (which I bless God is my own) but condescend to converse with me for hours, without flying out of my house as if they had been scalded.—Well! for my share, I always said to my maid Kitty, that I was sure there was something very strange and mysterious about this fine Madam:—there

was always an air,—a sort of a look—
 O dear—I am not to be deceived:—
 and to work for the milliners for a livelihood, quoth a! — No, no, she has had, or will have, other ways to get a living, or my penetration greatly deceives me. I always indeed, said, she was one who had run away from her friends, or perhaps eloped from a husband:—nay, God knows who, or what she is:—as my poor dear, first husband (he was a merry man) used to say, concealment always implies something wrong:—and for such a young creature to shut herself up from all the world had a very *bad* look—but it shall be a warning to me for the future, how I ever take in ”

“ To

To whom, Mrs. Smith, (interrupted I) do you address your long harrangue, or of whom are you speaking?"—Not but that I had gathered from twenty hints, this fine, voluble landlady dropped, as well as from my beating heart, which 'from its violent perturbation, flung me into an agitation, I could very ill conceal, of whom, I feared, she was speaking.—I longed, yet dreaded to know the fatal truth.

"Your pardon, Sir, (she replied) I have been speaking of a Miss Seymour, who has left my house this morning, in a most * unconscionable manner:—

* We presume Mrs. Smith meant unaccountable.]

Kitty hurried me to death, by saying she really believed Miss Seymour was going distracted, for that she met her on the stairs with a wild look like a very mad woman. Poor Kitty only asked her, what-are you going out this fine morning, Miss Seymour? when Madam flounced by her, quite breathless, with "Don't stop me, pray—let me pass."—and down she flew.—I just stepped out of my little parlour, when she flung me my money (though her intention, I doubt not, was to have gone off scot-free) and so she departed. On the report Kitty made, I was so extremely frightened, and my poor nerves (always in a *delicate* state) that I was very near fainting;—and it was as much

as they could keep life in me, for near an hour, with water and hartshorn, so greatly was I alarmed by this young flirt's behaviour."

O, Charles! what I suffered, on hearing she was departed, is not to be expressed. The loquacious Mrs. Smith, might have run on, with her *charitable* harangue, for an hour.—I was indeed struck with an astonishment, mixed with grief, which I will not attempt to describe;—my heart seemed to die within me.—I retired to my apartment, flung myself on my wretched bed, and gave way to the strongest emotions of amazement, grief, and despair, which man ever felt.—Heavens! exclaimed I,

what a fate is mine!—to have found, by the most happy chance, but yesterday, the enchantress of my soul, the lovely woman who has caused me so many weeks of restless anxiety, and the next fatal hour to lose her!—lose her for ever!—how bitter my anguish!—how lasting my pain!—and what a sad gradation is there in that love, which (as an elegant author observes) rises from despair to hope—then to probability—to possibility, and then sinks at once again to flat despair.—What an unaccountable passion is this love!—and what strange creatures does it make of us!—I am lost in a labyrinth of doubts, and conjectures, about this lovely woman:—one moment I think she

she may be both innocent, and distressed:—the next, I think, there is, as the talkative Mrs. Smith (naturally though enough) observed, something extremely odd, and mysterious in this her sudden departure. The wildness in her air she mentioned—what could *that* mean?—and of whom could she fly from in this house?—strange---very strange.---And then I know she has changed her name to that of *Seymour*, and that before she passed to all about her for a married woman.---What can this mean? I like not this changing of characters, any more than her abrupt flight*. But

* The young and unexperienced may here see the danger they expose themselves to, by any little deviation from the plain truth.

L 5

yet,

yet, in spite of all these unfavourable appearances, I must for ever love her, and *her* only. What extatic hopes did I vainly indulge but last night, in resolving, now I had once more found her, to support her (though unknown to herself who her benefactor was) in every comfort, and superfluity of life. I, but this morning, was at my bankers for a note of fifty pounds, which I intended, on my return, (and I fondly meditated in what manner, without hurting her delicacy, I might best relieve her distresses) to convey my bounty by some means to her, as from an unknown hand:—but this disappearing on a sudden!—in short, I know not what to think:—I am lost in doubts, and

and uncertainty, which nothing can clear up but the secret, wonder-working hand of Providence in its own good time:—not another word, therefore, of murmur, censure, or discontent.

I am, at present, removed from Kensington to Richmond. The occasion of my removal is, that my aunt Morley, whose death is hourly expected, and who lodges here for the summer season, begs me to be near her; and as her own lodgings are not large enough for me, and my servants; I have taken some apartments in a pleasant house as near her as possible.—I spend every hour with her—and happy shall

shall I be, if by any softening aid in my power, I can alleviate her dreadful incurable malady, which is of all others, the most shocking, an inveterate putrid cancer in her breast. — Her excellent character you are well acquainted with; — the uncommon fortitude with which she bears the most painful operation the art of surgery can inflict, convinces me of the inestimable advantages of a well-spent life. — She talks of dying, as calmly as most other people talk of going to sleep. As you are not unacquainted with the uncommon affection this dear woman has shewn to me from my infancy; think, my dear friend, what I must suffer, when, with the most smiling

smiling composure, she begs me to tell her, when I think she shall be *released*;—when I imagine she shall be removed from the miserable languishments of a sick bed, into the glorious liberty of the angels in heaven! She talks in this style like a dying faint: she will take no medicine but from my hand:—“Where is Harry?—Let him close my dying eyes:—let me behold him to the last moment—.” This she is perpetually saying. Neither will she suffer any remedy to be applied till I have been first consulted. Her large fortune (for you know, early in life, she married a merchant of immense riches, who, on his death, left her all) she

she has bequeathed to me solely;—a genteel legacy to Fanny Harley, my sister, only excepted.—But, ah! my Stanley, what will all this acquisition of riches, this inundation of money, which is flowing in upon me, from every quarter, avail, when I must remain in *single* wretchedness;—it being absolutely impossible for me ever again to find, or if I did, to *obtain* the only woman I ever did, or ever can love!

I direct this to you at Paris, where I imagine by this time you are.—Sir William Powis, I find, meets you there, to accompany you to the Spa.—I hope myself to be able to leave England in
a few

a few weeks:—perhaps I may first join you, and so proceed through Germany to Italy that way:---but I shall not confine my rambles to Europe, for I intend to visit most parts of Asia:----in short, I propose, after settling my affairs, (and the death of this good woman will still, I fear, prevent my setting out so soon as I intended) to leave Britain for a long---long term of years,----perhaps for life.----Nothing, my friend, but a constant succession of new scenes, can afford relief to a mind so *chained* as mine, to one object. Desperate diseases, you know, must have desperate remedies.----Heigh ho!----a sigh will ever attend the fatal remembrance

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brance of——but I fly from the heart-
felt subject.

You desire me to transmit to you,
by the opportunity of Sir William
Powis, the miniature picture you beg-
ged to have before I left the king-
dom:—it has been finished above a
fortnight, by the queen's justly-admired
inimitable miniature painter, who is an
honour to his art; and my friends tell
me it is an exact likeness.---My sister
Fanny has seen it, and insists I sit again
before my departure, as she chuses to
have my likeness, she says, placed in
one of her bracelets.---I most certainly,
my friend, should have complied with
your

your request in sending the picture, but am sorry---very sorry to say, that, after the strictest search in my apartment, where I had left it, it is not to be found.---Very strange!---but so it is.---I have examined every servant I have---but they know nothing of the matter; and I should be highly unjust to suspect them, as I believe they are very honest fellows:---neither of the good woman of the house can I harbour the least suspicion. I am happy in not being of a jealous, suspicious temper;---for how know I, that *suspicion* may not be *injustice*?---There seems to be less pride, than folly, in being ashamed of having been deceived in such a case;

for

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for it argues more an undefigning integrity of heart, than a weakness of head: and how uncomfortable must be the reflection to a good mind to have suspected an innocent person, who, in the end, proves to have deserved our utmost esteem!---What reparation can be made for suspecting the innocent*?

I have written a long letter, and still have a thousand things to say.---I will write again next week by the young Baronet.

* What an excellent mind, and how worthy of imitation in every incident of life, is this worthy man!

I am

I am this instant sent for to my poor dying aunt.-----That every blessing may attend you, which the recovery of your health can admit, is the most sincere wish of, dear Charles, however distant, or long absent,

Your faithful,

H. B.

P. S. If I can by any means find this picture, you may depend on receiving it:---in the mean time I shall make strict search after the *thief*, whom I shall call very severely to account, and punish accordingly.

End of the SECOND VOLUME.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE
 I am sure that you will find this to be a
 very good and useful book, and I shall
 be very glad to hear of your success in
 your studies. I am, Sir, your obedient
 servant,

I shall call very severely to account, and
 make full satisfaction, when
 I shall call very severely to account, and
 make full satisfaction, when

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME

